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THE RECREATIONS

OF

CHRISTOPHER NORTH.

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THE

RECREATIONS

OF

CHRISTOPHER NORTH.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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VOL. II.

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WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS,
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RECREATIONS

OF

CHRISTOPHER NORTH.

THE MOORS.

PROLOGUE.

ONCE we knew the Highlands absolutely too well—not a nook that was not as familiar to us as our brown study. We had not to complain of the lochs, glens, woods, and mountains alone, for having so fastened themselves upon us on a great scale that we found it impossible to shake them off; but the hardship in our case was, that all the subordinate parts of the scenery, many of them dull and dreary enough, and some of them intolerably tedious, had taken it upon themselves so to thrust their intimacy upon us, in all winds and weathers, that without giving them the cut direct there was no way of escaping from the burden of their friendship. To

courteous and humane Christians, such as we have always been both by name and nature as far back as we can recollect, it is painful to cut even an impudent stone, or an upsetting tree that may cross our path uncalled for, or obtrude itself on our privacy when we wish to be alone in our meditations. Yet, we confess, they used sometimes sorely to try our temper. It is all very well for you, our good sir, to say in excuse for them that such objects are inanimate. So much the worse. Were they animate, like yourself, they might be reasoned with on the impropriety of interrupting the stream of any man's soliloquies. But being not merely inanimate but irrational, objects of that class know not to keep their own place, which indeed, it may be said in reply, is kept for them by nature. But that Mistress of the Ceremonies, though enjoying a fine green old age, cannot be expected to be equally attentive to the proceedings of all the objects under her control. Accordingly, often when she is not looking, what more common than for a huge hulking fellow of a rock, with an absurd tuft of trees on his head, who has observed you lying half-asleep on the greensward, to hang eavesdropping, as it were, over your most secret thoughts, which he whispers to the winds, and they to all the clouds! Or for some grotesque and fantastic ash, with a crooked back, and arms disproportionately long, like a giant in extreme old age dwindling into a dwarf, to jut out from the hole in the wall, and should your leaden eye chance at the time to love the ground, to put his mossy fist right in your philosophical countenance! In short, it is very possible to

know a country so thoroughly well, outside and in, from mountain to molehill, that you get mutually tired of one another's company, and are ready to vent your quarrel in reciprocal imprecations.

So was it once with us and the Highlands. That "too much familiarity breeds contempt" we learned many a long year ago, when learning to write large text; and passages in our life have been a running commentary on the theme then set us by that incomparable caligraphist, Butterworth. All "the old familiar faces" occasionally come in for a portion of that feeling; and on that account, we are glad that we saw, but for one day and one night, Charles Lamb's. Therefore, some dozen years ago we gave up the Highlands, not wishing to quarrel with them, and confined our tender assiduities to the Lowlands, while, like two great Flats as we were, we kept staring away at each other, with our lives on the same level. All the consequences that might naturally have been expected have ensued; and we are now as heartily sick of the Lowlands, and they of us. What can we do but return to our First Love?

Allow us to offer another view of the subject. There is not about Old Age one blessing more deserving gratitude to Heaven, than the gradual bedimming of memory brought on by years. In youth, all things, internal and external, are unforgetable, and by the perpetual presence of passion oppress the soul. The eye of a woman haunts the victim on whom it may have given a glance, till he leaps perhaps out of a four-story window. A beautiful lake, or a sublime mountain,

drives a young poet as mad as a March hare. He loses himself in an interminable forest louring all round the horizon of a garret six feet square. It matters not to him whether his eyes be open or shut. He is at the mercy of all Life and all Nature, and not for one hour can he escape from their persecutions. His soul is the slave of the Seven Senses, and each is a tyrant with instruments of torture, to whom and to which Phalaris, with his brazen bull, was a pointless joke. But in old age "the heart of a man is oppressed with care" no longer; the Seven Tyrants have lost their sceptres, and are dethroned; and the greyheaded gentleman feels that his soul has "set up its rest." His eyes are dazzled no more with insufferable light—no more his ears tingle with music too exquisite to be borne—no more his touch is transport. The scents of nature, stealing from the balmy mouths of lilies and roses, are deadened in his nostrils. He is above and beyond the reach of all the long arms of many-handed misery, as he is out of the convulsive clutch of bliss. And is not this the state of best happiness for mortal man? Tranquillity! The peaceful air that we breathe as we are westering towards the sunset-regions of our Being, and feel that we are about to drop down for ever out of sight behind the Sacred Mountains.

All this may be very fine, but cannot be said to help us far on with our Prologue. Let us try it again. Old men, we remarked, ought to be thankful to Heaven for their dim memories. Never do we feel that more profoundly than when dreaming about the Highlands. All

is confusion. Nothing distinctly do we remember—not even the names of lochs and mountains. Where is Ben Cru—Cru—Cru—what's-his-name? Ay—ay—Cruachan. At this blessed moment we see his cloud-capped head—but we have clean forgotten the silver sound of the name of the county he encumbers. Ross-shire? Nay, that won't do—he never was at Tain. We are assured by Dr Reid's, Dr Beattie's, and Dugald Stewart's great Instinctive First Principle Belief, that oftener than once, or ten times either, have we been in a day-long hollow among precipices dear to eagles, called Glen-Etive. But where begins or where ends that "severe sojourn," is now to us a mystery—though we hear the sound of the sea and the dashing of cataracts. Yet though all is thus dim in our memory, would you believe it that nothing is utterly lost? No, not even the thoughts that soared like eagles vanishing in the light—or that dived like ravens into the gloom. They all re-appear—those from the Empyrean—these from Hades—reminding us of the good or the evil borne in other days, within the spiritual regions of our boundless being. The world of eye and ear is not in reality narrowed because it glimmers; ever and anon as years advance, a light direct from heaven dissipates the gloom, and bright and glorious as of yore the landscape laughs to the sea, the sea to heaven, and heaven back again to the gazing spirit that leaps forward to the hailing light with something of the same divine passion that gave wings to our youth.

All this may be still finer, yet cannot be said, any more than the preceding paragraph, much to help us on with

our Prologue. To come then, if possible, to the point at once—We are happy that our dim memory and our dim imagination restore and revive in our mind none but the characteristic features of the scenery of the Highlands, unmixed with baser matter, and all floating magnificently through a spiritual haze, so that the whole region is now more than ever idealized; and in spite of all his present, past, and future prosiness—Christopher North, soon as in thought his feet touch the heather, becomes a poet.

It has long been well known to the whole world that we are a sad egotist—yet our egotism, so far from being a detraction from our attraction, seems to be the very soul of it, making it impossible in nature for any reasonable being to come within its sphere, without being drawn by sweet compulsion to the old wizard's heart. He is so *humane!* Only look at him for a few minutes, and liking becomes love—love becomes veneration. And all this even before he has opened his lips—by the mere power of his ogles and his temples. In his large mild blue eyes is written not only his nature, but miraculously, in German text, his very name, Christopher North. Mrs Gentle was the first to discover it; though we remember having been asked more than once in our youth, by an alarmed virgin on whom we happened at the time to be looking tender, "If we were aware that there was something preternatural in our eyes?" Christopher is conspicuous in our right eye—North in our left; and when we wish to be incog., we either draw their fringed curtains, or, nunlike, keep the telltale

orbs fixed on the ground. Candour whispers us to confess, that some years ago a child was exhibited at sixpence with WILLIAM WOOD legible in its optics—having been affiliated, by ocular evidence, on a gentleman of that name, who, with his dying breath, disowned the soft impeachment. But in that case nature had written a vile scrawl—in ours her hand is firm, and goes off with a flourish.

Have you ever entered, all alone, the shadows of some dilapidated old burial-place, and in a nook made beautiful by wild-briers and a flowering thorn, beheld the stone image of some long-forgotten worthy lying on his grave? Some knight who perhaps had fought in Palestine—or some holy man, who in the Abbey—now almost gone—had led a long still life of prayer? The moment you knew that you were standing among the dwellings of the dead, how impressive became the ruins! Did not that stone image wax more and more lifelike in its repose? And as you kept your eyes fixed on the features Time had not had the heart to obliterate, seemed not your soul to hear the echoes of the Miserere sung by the brethren?

So looks Christopher—on his couch—in his ALCOVE. He is taking his siesta—and the faint shadows you see coming and going across his face are dreams. 'Tis a pensive dormitory, and hangs undisturbed in its spiritual region as a cloud on the sky of the Longest Day when it falls on the Sabbath.

What think you of OUR FATHER, alongside of the Pedlar in the *Excursion?* Wordsworth says—

"Amid the gloom,
Spread by a brotherhood of lofty elms,

Appear'd a roofless hut; four naked walls
That stared upon each other! I look'd round,
And to my wish and to my hope espied
Him whom I sought; a man of reverend age,
But stout and hale, for travel unimpair'd.
There was he seen upon the cottage bench,
Recumbent in the shade, as if asleep;
An iron-pointed staff lay at his side."

Alas! "stout and hale" are words that could not be applied, without cruel mocking, to our figure. "Recumbent in the shade" unquestionably he is—yet "recumbent" is a clumsy word for such quietude; and, recurring to our former image, we prefer to say, in the words of Wilson—

"Still is he as a frame of stone
That in its stillness lies alone,
With silence breathing from its face,
For ever in some holy place,
Chapel or aisle—on marble laid,
With pale hands on his pale breast spread,
An image humble, meek, and low,
Of one forgotten long ago!"

No "iron-pointed staff lies at his side"—but "Satan's dread," THE CRUTCH! Wordsworth tells us over again that the Pedlar—

"With no appendage but a staff,
The prized memorial of *relinquish'd* toils,
Upon the cottage-bench reposed his limbs,
Screen'd from the sun."

On his couch, in his Alcove, Christopher is reposing—not his limbs alone—but his very essence. THE CRUTCH is, indeed, both *de jure* and *de facto* the prized memorial of toils—but, thank Heaven, not *relinquished* toils; and then how characteristic of the dear merciless old man—hardly distinguishable among the fringed draperies of his canopy, the dependent and independent KNOUT.

Was the Pedlar absolutely asleep? We shrewdly suspect not—'twas but a doze. "Recumbent in the shade, *as if asleep*"—"Upon that cottage-bench *reposed* his limbs"—induce us to lean to the opinion that he was but on the border of the Land of Nod. Nay, the poet gets more explicit, and with that minute particularity so charming in poetical description, finally informs us that

> ".Supine the wanderer lay,
> *His eyes, as if in drowsiness, half shut,*
> The shadows of the breezy elms above
> Dappling his face."

It would appear, then, on an impartial consideration of all the circumstances of the case, that the "man of reverend age," though "recumbent" and "supine" upon the "cottage bench," "as if asleep," and "his eyes, as if in drowsiness, half shut," was in a mood between sleeping and waking; and this creed is corroborated by the following assertion—

> "He had not heard the sound
> Of my approaching steps, and in the shade
> Unnoticed did I stand some minutes' space.
> At length I hail'd him, seeing that his hat
> Was moist with water-drops, as if the brim
> Had newly scoop'd a running stream."

He rose; and so do We, for probably by this time you may have discovered that we have been describing Ourselves in our siesta or mid-day snooze—as we have been beholding in our mind's eye our venerated and mysterious Double.

We cannot help flattering ourselves—if indeed it be flattery—that though no relative of his, we have a look

of the Pedlar—as he is elaborately painted by the hand of a great master in the aforesaid Poem.

> "Him had I mark'd the day before—alone,
> And station'd in the public way, with face
> Turn'd to the sun then setting, while that staff
> Afforded to the figure of the man,
> Detain'd for contemplation or repose,
> Graceful support," &c.

As if it were yesterday, we remember our first interview with the Bard. It was at the Lady's Oak, between Ambleside and Rydal. We were then in the very flower of our age—just sixty; so we need not say the century had then seen but little of this world. The Bard was a mere boy of some six lustres, and had a lyrical ballad look that established his identity at first sight, all unlike the lack-a-daisical. His right hand was within his vest on the region of the heart, and he ceased his crooning as we stood face to face. What a noble countenance! at once austere and gracious—haughty and benign—of a man conscious of his greatness while yet companioning with the humble—an unrecognized power dwelling in the woods. Our figure at that moment so impressed itself on his imagination, that it in time supplanted the image of the real Pedlar, and grew into the *Emeritus of the Three Days.* We were standing in that very attitude—having deposited on the coping of the wall our Kit, since adopted by the British Army, with us at once a library and a larder.

And again—and even more characteristically—

> "Plain was his garb:
> Such as might suit a rustic sire, prepared

For Sabbath duties; yet he was a man
Whom no one could have pass'd without remark.
Active and nervous was his gait; his limbs
And his whole figure breathed intelligence.
Time had compress'd the freshness of his cheeks
Into a narrower circle of deep red,
But had not tamed his eye, that under brows,
Shaggy and grey, had meanings, which it brought
From years of youth; whilst, like a being made
Of many beings, he had wondrous skill
To blend with knowledge of the years to come,
Human, or such as lie beyond the grave."

In our intellectual characters we indulge the pleasing hope that there are some striking points of resemblance, on which, however, our modesty will not permit us to dwell—and in our acquirements, more particularly in Plane and Spherical Trigonometry.

"While yet he linger'd in the rudiments
Of science, and among her simplest laws,
His triangles—they were the stars of heaven.
The silent stars! oft did he take delight
To measure the altitude of some tall crag,
That is the eagle's birthplace," &c.

So it was with us. Give us but a base and a quadrant —and when a student in Jemmy Millar's class, we could have given you the altitude of any steeple in Glasgow or the Gorbals.

Occasionally, too, in a small party of friends, though not proud of the accomplishment, we have been prevailed on, as you may have heard, to delight humanity with a song —"The Flowers of the Forest," "Roy's Wife," "Flee up, flee up, thou bonnie bonnie Cock," or "Auld Langsyne"—just as the Pedlar

> " At request would sing
> Old songs, the product of his native hills;
> A skilful distribution of sweet sounds,
> Feeding the soul, and eagerly imbibed
> As cool refreshing water, by the care
> Of the industrious husbandman diffused
> Through a parch'd meadow field in time of drought."

Our natural disposition, too, is as amiable as that of the "Vagrant Merchant."

> " And surely never did there live on earth
> A man of kindlier nature. The rough sports
> And teasing ways of children vex'd not him:
> Indulgent listener was he to the tongue
> Of garrulous age; nor did the sick man's tale,
> To his fraternal sympathy address'd,
> Obtain reluctant hearing."

Who can read the following lines, and not think of Christopher North?

> " Birds and beasts,
> And the mute fish that glances in the stream,
> And harmless reptile coiling in the sun,
> And gorgeous insect hovering in the air,
> The fowl domestic, and the household dog—
> In his capacious mind he loved them all."

True, that our love of

> " The mute fish that glances in the stream,"

is not incompatible with the practice of the "angler's silent trade," or with the pleasure of "filling our pannier." The Pedlar, too, we have reason to know, was like his poet and ourselves, in that art a craftsman, and for love beat the molecatcher at busking a batch of May-flies. We question whether Lascelles himself

were his master at a green dragon. "The harmless reptile coiling in the sun" we are not so sure about, having once been bit by an adder, whom in our simplicity we mistook for a slow-worm—the very day, by the by, on which we were poisoned by a dish of toad-stools, by our own hand gathered for mushrooms. But we have long given over chasing butterflies, and feel, as the Pedlar did, that they are beautiful creatures, and that 'tis a sin between finger and thumb to compress their mealy wings. The household dog we do indeed dearly love, though when old Surly looks suspicious we prudently keep out of the reach of his chain. As for "the domestic fowl," we breed scores every spring, solely for the delight of seeing them at their *walks*,

> "Among the rural villages and farms;"

and though game to the back-bone, they are allowed to wear the spurs nature gave them—to crow unclipped, challenging but the echoes; nor is the sward, like the *sod*, ever reddened with their heroic blood, for hateful to our ears the war-song,

> "Welcome to your gory bed,
> Or to victory!"

'Tis our way, you know, to pass from gay to grave matter, and often from a jocular to a serious view of the same subject—it being natural to us—and having become habitual too, from our writing occasionally in Blackwood's Magazine. All the world knows our admiration of Wordsworth, and admits that we have done almost as much as

Jeffrey or Taylor to make his poetry popular among the "educated circles." But we are not a nation of idolaters, and worship neither graven image nor man that is born of a woman. We may seem to have treated the Pedlar with insufficient respect in that playful parallel between him and Ourselves; but there you are wrong again, for we desire thereby to do him honour. We wish now to say a few words on the wisdom of making such a personage the chief character in a Philosophical Poem.

He is described as endowed by nature with a great intellect, a noble imagination, a profound soul, and a tender heart. It will not be said that nature keeps these her noblest gifts for human beings born in this or that condition of life: she gives them to her favourites—for so, in the highest sense, they are to whom such gifts befall; and not unfrequently, in an obscure place, of one of the FORTUNATI

> "The fulgent head
> Star-bright appears."

Wordsworth appropriately places the birth of such a being in a humble dwelling in the Highlands of Scotland.

> "Among the hills of Athol he was born;
> Where on a small hereditary farm,
> An unproductive slip of barren ground,
> His parents, with their numerous offspring, dwelt;
> A virtuous household, though exceeding poor."

His childhood was nurtured at home in Christian love and truth—and acquired other knowledge at a winter

school; for in summer he "tended cattle on the hill"—

> "That stood
> Sole building on a mountain's dreary edge."

And the influence of such education and occupation among such natural objects, Wordsworth expounds in some as fine poetry as ever issued from the cells of philosophic thought.

> "So the foundations of his mind were laid."

The boy had small need of books—

> "For many a tale
> Traditionary, round the mountains hung,
> And many a legend, peopling the dark woods,
> Nourish'd Imagination in her growth,
> And gave the mind that apprehensive power
> By which she is made quick to recognise
> The moral properties and scope of things."

But in the Manse there were books—and he read

> "Whate'er the minister's old shelf supplied,
> The life and death of martyrs, who sustain'd,
> With will inflexible, those fearful pangs,
> Triumphantly display'd in records left
> Of persecution and the Covenant."

Can you not believe that by the time he was as old as you were when you used to ride to the races on a pony, by the side of your sire the Squire, this boy was your equal in knowledge, though you had a private tutor all to yourself, and were then a promising lad, as indeed you are now after the lapse of a quarter of a century? True, as yet he "had small Latin, and no Greek;" but the elements of these languages may be learned—trust us—

by slow degrees—by the mind rejoicing in the consciousness of its growing faculties—during leisure hours from other studies—as they were by the Athol adolescent. A Scholar—in your sense of the word—he might not be called, even when he had reached his seventeenth year, though probably he would have puzzled you in Livy and Virgil; nor of English poetry had he read much—the less the better for such a mind—at that age, and in that condition—for

> "Accumulated feelings press'd his heart
> With still increasing weight; he was o'erpower'd
> By nature, by the turbulence subdued
> Of his own mind, by mystery and hope,
> And the first virgin passion of a soul
> Communing with the glorious Universe."

But he had read Poetry—ay, the same Poetry that Wordsworth's self read at the same age—and

> "Among the hills
> He gazed upon that mighty Orb of Sun,
> The divine Milton."

Thus endowed, and thus instructed,

> "By Nature, that did never yet betray
> The heart that loved her,"

the youth was "greater than he knew;" yet that there was something great in, as well as about him, he felt—

> "Thus daily thirsting in that lonesome life,"

for some diviner communication than had yet been vouchsafed to him by the Giver and Inspirer of his restless Being.

> "In dreams, in study, and in ardent thought,
> Thus was he rear'd; much wanting to assist
> The growth of intellect, yet gaining more,

And every moral feeling of his soul
Strengthen'd and braced, by breathing in content
The keen, the wholesome air of poverty,
And drinking from the well of homely life."

But he is in his eighteenth year, and

"Is summon'd to select the course
Of humble industry that promised best
To yield him no unworthy maintenance."

For a season he taught a village school, which many a fine, high, and noble spirit has done and is doing; but he was impatient of the hills he loved, and

"That stern yet kindly spirit, who constrains
The Savoyard to quit his native rocks,
The free-born Swiss to leave his narrow vales,
(Spirit attach'd to regions mountainous
Like their own steadfast clouds,) did now impel
His restless mind to look abroad with hope."

It had become his duty to choose a profession—a trade—a calling. He was not a gentleman, mind ye, and had probably never so much as heard a rumour of the existence of a silver fork: he had been born with a wooden spoon in his mouth—and had lived, partly from choice and partly from necessity, on a vegetable diet. He had not ten pounds in the world he could call his own; but he could borrow fifty, for his father's son was to be trusted to that amount by any family that chanced to have it among the Athol hills—therefore he resolved on "a hard service," which

"Gain'd merited respect in simpler times;
When squire, and priest, and they who round them dwelt
In rustic sequestration, all dependent
Upon the PEDLAR'S toil, supplied their wants,
Or pleased their fancies with the ware he brought.

Would Alfred have ceased to be Alfred had he lived twenty years in the hut where he spoiled the bannocks? Would Gustavus have ceased to be Gustavus had he been doomed to dree an ignoble life in the obscurest nook in Dalecarlia? Were princes and peers in our day degraded by working, in their expatriation, with head or hand for bread? Are the Polish patriots degraded by working at eighteenpence a-day, without victuals, on embankments of railroads? "At the risk of giving a shock to the prejudices of artificial society, I have ever been ready to pay homage to the aristocracy of nature, under a conviction that vigorous human-heartedness is the constituent principle of true taste." These are Wordsworth's own words, and deserve letters of gold. He has given many a shock to the prejudices of artificial society; and in ten thousand cases, where the heart of such society was happily sound at the core, notwithstanding the rotten kitchen-stuff with which it was encrusted, the shocks have killed the prejudices; and men and women, encouraged to consult their own breasts, have heard responses there to the truths uttered in music by the high-souled Bard, assuring them of an existence there of capacities of pure delight, of which they had had either but a faint suspicion, or, because "of the world's dread laugh," feared to indulge, and nearly let die.

Mr Wordsworth quotes from Heron's *Scotland* an interesting passage, illustrative of the life led in our country at that time by that class of persons from whom he has chosen one—not, mind you, imaginary, though

for purposes of imagination—adding that " his own personal knowledge emboldened him to draw the portrait." In that passage Heron says, " As they wander, each alone, through thinly inhabited districts, they form habits of reflection and of sublime contemplation," and that, with all their qualifications, no wonder they should contribute much to polish the roughness and soften the rusticity of our peasantry. In North America," says he, " travelling merchants from the settlements have done and continue to do much more towards civilizing the Indian natives than all the missionaries, Papist or Protestant, who have ever been sent among them;" and, speaking again of Scotland, he says, " it is not more than twenty or thirty years, since a young man going from any part of Scotland to England for the purpose to *carry the pack*, was considered as going to lead the life, and acquire the fortune of a gentleman. When, after twenty years' absence in that honourable line of employment, he returned with his acquisitions to his native country, he was regarded as a gentleman to all intents and purposes." We have ourselves known gentlemen who had carried the pack —one of them a man of great talents and acquirements—who lived in his old age in the highest circles of society. Nobody troubled their head about his birth and parentage—*for he was then very rich;* but you could not sit ten minutes in his company without feeling that he was " one of God Almighty's gentlemen," belonging to the " aristocracy of Nature."

You have heard, we hope, of Alexander Wilson, the

illustrious Ornithologist, second not even to Audubon—and sometimes absurdly called the Great American Ornithologist, because with pen and pencil he painted in colours that will never die—the Birds of the New World. He was a weaver—a Paisley weaver—a useful trade, and a pleasant place—where these now dim eyes of ours first saw the light. And Sandy was a pedlar. Hear his words in an autobiography unknown to the Bard:—"I have this day, I believe, measured the height of an hundred stairs, and explored the recesses of twice that number of miserable habitations; and what have I gained by it?—only two shillings of worldly pelf! but an invaluable treasure of observation. In this elegant dome, wrapt up in glittering silks, and stretched on the downy sofa, recline the fair daughters of wealth and indolence—the ample mirror, flowery floor, and magnificent couch, their surrounding attendants; while, suspended in his wiry habitation above, the shrill-piped canary warbles to enchanting echoes. Within the confines of that sickly hovel, hung round with squadrons of his brother-artists, the pale-faced weaver plies the resounding lay, or launches the melancholy murmuring shuttle. Lifting this simple latch, and stooping for entrance to the miserable hut, there sits poverty and ever-moaning disease, clothed in dunghill rags, and ever shivering over the fireless chimney. Ascending this stair, the voice of joy bursts on my ear—the bridegroom and bride, surrounded by their jocund companions, circle the sparkling glass and humorous joke, or join in the raptures of the noisy dance—the squeaking fiddle

breaking through the general uproar in sudden intervals, while the sounding floor groans beneath its unruly load. Leaving these happy mortals, and ushering into this silent mansion, a more solemn—a striking object presents itself to my view. The windows, the furniture, and every thing that could lend one cheerful thought, are hung in solemn white; and there, stretched pale and lifeless, lies the awful corpse, while a few weeping friends sit, black and solitary, near the breathless clay. In this other place, the fearless sons of Bacchus extend their brazen throats, in shouts like bursting thunder, to the praise of their gorgeous chief. Opening this door, the lonely matron explores, for consolation, her Bible; and in this house the wife brawls, the children shriek, and the poor husband bids me depart, lest his termagant's fury should vent itself on me. In short, such an inconceivable variety daily occurs to my observation in real life, that would, were they moralized upon, convey more maxims of wisdom, and give a juster knowledge of mankind, than whole volumes of Lives and Adventures, that perhaps never had a being except in the prolific brains of their fantastic authors."

At a subsequent period he retraced his steps, taking with him copies of his poems to distribute among subscribers, and endeavour to promote a more extensive circulation. Of this excursion also he has given an account in his journal, from which it appears that his success was far from encouraging. Among amusing incidents, sketches of character, occasional sound and intelligent remarks upon the manners and prospects of the

common classes of society into which he found his way, there are not a few severe expressions indicative of deep disappointment, and some that merely bespeak the keener pangs of the wounded pride founded on conscious merit. "You," says he, on one occasion, "whose souls are susceptible of the finest feelings, who are elevated to rapture with the least dawnings of hope, and sunk into despondency with the slightest thwartings of your expectations—think what I felt." Wilson himself attributed his ill fortune, in his attempts to gain the humble patronage of the poor for his poetical pursuits, to his occupation. "A *packman* is a character which none esteems, and almost every one despises. The idea that people of all ranks entertain of them is, that they are mean-spirited loquacious liars, cunning and illiterate, watching every opportunity, and using every mean art within their power, to cheat." This is a sad account of the estimation in which a trade was then held in Scotland, which the greatest of our living poets has attributed to the chief character in a poem comprehensive of philosophical discussions on all the highest interests of humanity. But both Wilson and Wordsworth are in the right: both saw and have spoken truth. Most small packmen were then, in some measure, what Wilson says they were generally esteemed to be—peddling pilferers, and insignificant swindlers. Poverty sent them swarming over bank and brae, and the "sma' kintra touns"—and for a plack people will forget principle who have, as we say in Scotland, missed the world. Wilson knew that to a man like himself there was degradation in such

a calling; and he latterly vented his contemptuous sense of it, exaggerating the baseness of the name and nature of *packman.* But suppose such a man as Wilson to have been in better times one of but a few packmen travelling regularly for years over the same country, each with his own district or domain, and there can be no doubt that he would have been an object both of interest and of respect—his opportunities of seeing the very best and the very happiest of humble life, in itself very various, would have been very great; and with his original genius, he would have become, like Wordsworth's Pedlar, a good moral Philosopher.

Without, therefore, denying the truth of his picture of packmanship, we may believe the truth of a picture entirely the reverse, from the hand and heart of a still wiser man—though his wisdom has been gathered from less immediate contact with the coarse garments and clay floors of the labouring poor.

It is pleasant to hear Wordsworth speak of his own "personal knowledge" of packmen or pedlars. We cannot say of him in the words of Burns, "the fient a pride, nae pride had he;" for pride and power are brothers on earth, whatever they may prove to be in heaven. But his prime pride is his poetry; and he had not now been "sole king of rocky Cumberland," had he not studied the character of his subjects in "huts where poor men lie"—had he not "stooped his anointed head" beneath the doors of such huts, as willingly as he ever raised it aloft, with all its glorious laurels, in the palaces of nobles and princes. Yes, the inspiration he

"derived from the light of setting suns," was not so sacred as that which often kindled within his spirit all the divinity of Christian man, when conversing charitably with his brother-man, a wayfarer on the dusty high-road, or among the green lanes and alleys of merry England. You are a scholar, and love poetry? Then here you have it of the finest, and will be sad to think that heaven had not made you a pedlar.

"In days of yore how fortunately fared
The Minstrel! wandering on from Hall to Hall,
Baronial Court or Royal; cheer'd with gifts
Munificent, and love, and Ladies' praise;
Now meeting on his road an armed Knight,
Now resting with a Pilgrim by the side
Of a clear brook;—beneath an Abbey's roof
One evening sumptuously lodged; the next
Humbly, in a religious Hospital;
Or with some merry Outlaws of the wood;
Or haply shrouded in a Hermit's cell.
Him, sleeping or awake, the Robber spared;
He walk'd—protected from the sword of war
By virtue of that sacred Instrument
His Harp, suspended at the Traveller's side,
His dear companion wheresoe'er he went,
Opening from Land to Land an easy way
By melody, and by the charm of verse.
Yet not the noblest of that honour'd Race
Drew happier, loftier, more empassion'd thoughts
From his long journeyings and eventful life,
Than this obscure Itinerant had skill
To gather, ranging through the tamer ground
Of these our unimaginative days;
Both while he trode the earth in humblest guise,
Accoutred with his burden and his staff;
And now, when free to move with lighter pace.

"What wonder, then, if I, whose favourite School
Hath been the fields, the roads, and rural lanes,

Look'd on this Guide with reverential love?
Each with the other pleased, we now pursued
Our journey—beneath favourable skies.
Turn whersoe'er we would, he was a light
Unfailing: not a hamlet could we pass,
Rarely a house, that did not yield to him
Remembrances; or from his tongue call forth
Some way-beguiling tale.
—Nor was he loath to enter ragged huts,
Huts where his charity was blest; his voice
Heard as the voice of an experienced friend.
And, sometimes, where the Poor Man held dispute
With his own mind, unable to subdue
Impatience, through inaptness to perceive
General distress in his particular lot;
Or cherishing resentment, or in vain
Struggling against it, with a soul perplex'd,
And finding in herself no steady power
To draw the line of comfort that divides
Calamity, the chastisement of Heaven,
From the injustice of our brother men;
To him appeal was made as to a judge;
Who, with an understanding heart, allay'd
The perturbation; listen'd to the plea;
Resolved the dubious point; and sentence gave
So grounded, so applied, that it was heard
With soften'd spirit—e'en when it condemn'd."

What was to hinder such a man—thus born and thus bred—with such a youth and such a prime—from being in his old age worthy of walking among the mountains with Wordsworth, and descanting

"On man, on nature, and on human life?"

And remember he was a *Scotsman*—compatriot of CHRISTOPHER NORTH.

What would you rather have had the Sage in the *Excursion* to have been? The Senior Fellow of a College?

A Head? A retired Judge? An Ex-Lord Chancellor? A Nabob? A Banker? A Millionaire? or, at once to condescend on individuals, Natus Consumere Fruges, Esquire? or the Honourable Custos Rotulorum?

You have read, bright bold neophyte, the Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle, upon the restoration of Lord Clifford, the Shepherd, to the estates and honours of his ancestors?

> "Who is he that bounds with joy
> On Carrock's side, a shepherd boy?
> No thoughts hath he but thoughts that pass
> Light as the wind along the grass.
> Can this be He that hither came
> In secret, like a smother'd flame?
> For whom such thoughtful tears were shed,
> For shelter and a poor man's bread?"

Who but the same noble boy whom his high-born mother in disastrous days had confided when an infant to the care of a peasant. Yet there he is no longer safe—and

> "The Boy must part from Mosedale groves,
> And leave Blencathara's rugged coves,
> And quit the flowers that summer brings
> To Glenderamakin's lofty springs;
> Must vanish, and his careless cheer
> Be turn'd to heaviness and fear."

Sir Launcelot Threlkeld shelters him till again he is free to set his foot on the mountains.

> "Again he wanders forth at will,
> And tends a flock from hill to hill:
> His garb is humble; ne'er was seen
> Such garb with such a noble mien;
> Among the shepherd grooms no mate
> Hath he, a child of strength and state."

So lives he till he is restored—

> " Glad were the vales, and every cottage hearth ;
> The shepherd-lord was honour'd more and more ;
> And, ages after he was laid in earth,
> ' The good Lord Clifford ' was the name he bore ! "

Now mark—that Poem has been declared by one and all of the " Poets of Britain " to be equal to any thing in the language; and its greatness lies in the perfect truth of the profound philosophy which so poetically delineates the education of the naturally noble character of Clifford. Does he sink in our esteem because at the Feast of the Restoration he turns a deaf ear to the fervent harper who sings,

> " Happy day and happy the hour,
> When our shepherd in his power,
> Mounted, mail'd, with lance and sword,
> To his ancestors restored,
> Like a re-appearing star,
> Like a glory from afar,
> First shall head the flock of war ? "

No—his generous nature is true to its generous nurture; and now deeply imbued with the goodness he had too long loved in others ever to forget, he appears noblest when showing himself faithful in his own hall to the " huts where poor men lie ;" while we know not, at the solemn close, which life the Poet has most glorified—the humble or the high—whether the Lord did the Shepherd more ennoble, or the Shepherd the Lord.

Now, we ask, is there any essential difference between what Wordsworth thus records of the high-born Shepherd-Lord in the Feast of Brougham Castle, and what

he records of the low-born Pedlar in the Excursion? None. They are both educated among the hills; and according to the nature of their own souls and that of their education, is the progressive growth and ultimate formation of their character. Both are exalted beings —because both are wise and good—but to his own coeval he has given, besides eloquence and genius,

"The vision and the faculty divine,"

that's

"When years had brought the philosophic mind"

he might walk through the dominions of the Intellect and the Imagination, a Sage and a Teacher.

Look into life, and watch the growth of character. Men are not what they seem to the outward eye—mere machines moving about in customary occupations—productive labourers of food and wearing apparel—slaves from morn to night at taskwork set them by the Wealth of Nations. They are the Children of God. The soul never sleeps—not even when its wearied body is heard snoring by people living in the next street. All the souls now in this world are for ever awake; and this life, believe us, though in moral sadness it has often been rightly called so, is no dream. In a dream we have no will of our own, no power over ourselves; ourselves are not felt to be ourselves; our familiar friends seem strangers from some far off country; the dead are alive, yet we wonder not; the laws of the physical world are suspended, or changed, or confused by our fantasy; Intellect, Imagination, the Moral Sense, Affection, Pas-

sion, are not possessed by us in the same way we possess them out of that mystery: were Life a Dream, or like a Dream, it would never lead to Heaven.

Again, then, we say to you, look into life and watch the growth of character. In a world where the ear cannot listen without hearing the clank of chains, the soul may yet be free as if it already inhabited the skies. For its Maker gave it LIBERTY OF CHOICE OF GOOD OR OF EVIL; and if it has chosen the good it is a King. All its faculties are then fed on their appropriate food provided for them in nature. It then knows where the necessaries and the luxuries of its life grow, and how they may be gathered—in a still sunny region inaccessible to blight —"no mildewed ear blasting his wholesome brother." In the beautiful language of our friend Aird—

"And thou shalt summer high in bliss upon the Hills of God."

Go, read the EXCURSION then—venerate the PEDLAR—pity the SOLITARY—respect the PRIEST, and love the POET.

So charmed have we been with the sound of our own voice—of all sounds on earth the sweetest surely to our ears—and, therefore, we so dearly love the monologue, and from the dialogue turn averse, impatient of him ycleped the interlocutor, who, like a shallow brook, will keep prattling and babbling on between the still deep pools of our discourse, which nature feeds with frequent waterfalls—so charmed have we been with the sound of our own voice, that scarcely conscious the while of more than a gentle ascent along the sloping sward of a rural

Sabbath day's journey, we perceive now that we must have achieved a Highland league—five miles—of rough uphill work, and are standing tiptoe on the Mountain-top. True that his altitude is not very great—somewhere, we should suppose, between two and three thousand feet—much higher than the Pentlands—somewhat higher than the Ochils—a middle-sized Grampian. Great painters and poets know that power lies not in mere measurable bulk. Atlas, it is true, is a giant, and he has need to be so, supporting the globe. So is Andes; but his strength has never been put to proof, as he carries but clouds. The Cordilleras—but we must not be personal—so suffice it to say, that soul, not size, equally in mountains and in men, is and inspires the true sublime. Mont Blanc might be as big again; but what then, if without his glaciers?

These mountains are neither immense nor enormous—nor are there any such in the British Isles. Look for a few of the highest on Riddell's ingenious Scale—in Scotland Ben-nevis, Helvellyn in England, in Ireland the Reeks; and you see that they are mere molehills to Chimborazo. Nevertheless, they are the hills of the Eagle. And think ye not that an Eagle glorifies the sky more than a Condor? That Vulture—for Vulture he is—flies league-high—the Golden Eagle is satisfied to poise himself half a mile above the loch, which, judged by the rapidity of its long river's flow, may be based a thousand feet or more above the level of the sea. From that height methinks the Bird-Royal, with the golden eye, can see the rising and the setting sun, and his

march on the meridian, without a telescope. If ever he fly by night—and we think we have seen a shadow passing the stars that was on the wing of life—he must be a rare astronomer.

> " High from the summit of a craggy cliff
> Hung o'er the deep, such as amazing frown
> On utmost Kilda's shore, whose lonely race
> Resign the setting sun to Indian worlds,
> The Royal Eagle rears his vigorous young,
> Strong-pounced and burning with paternal fire.
> Now fit to raise a kingdom of their own
> He drives them from his fort, the towering seat
> For ages of his empire; which in peace
> Unstain'd he holds, while many a league to sea
> He wings his course, and preys in distant isles."

Do you long for wings, and envy the Eagle? Not if you be wise. Alas! such is human nature, that in one year's time the novelty of pinions would be over, and you would skim undelighted the edges of the clouds. Why do we think it a glorious thing to fly from the summit of some inland mountain away to distant isles? Because our feet are bound to the dust. We enjoy the eagle's flight far more than the eagle himself driving headlong before the storm; for imagination dallies with the unknown power, and the wings that are denied to our bodies are expanded in our souls. Sublime are the circles the sun-staring creature traces in the heavens, to us who lie stretched among the heather bloom. Could we do the same, we should still be longing to pierce through the atmosphere to some other planet; and an elevation of leagues above the snows of the Himalyas would not satisfy our aspirations. But we can calcu-

late the distances of the stars, and are happy as Galileo in his dungeon.

Yet an Eagle we are, and therefore proud of You our Scottish mountains, as you are of Us. Stretch yourself up to your full height as we now do to ours—and let "Andes, giant of the Western Star" but dare to look at us, and we will tear the "meteor standard to the winds unfurled" from his cloudy hands. There you stand—and were you to rear your summits much higher into heaven you would alarm the hidden stars.

Yet we have seen you higher—but it was in storm. In calm like this, you do well to look beautiful—your solemn altitude suits the sunny season, and the peaceful sky. Bnt when the thunder at mid-day would hide your heads in a night of cloud, you thrust them through the blackness, and show them to the glens, crowned with fire.

Are they a sea of mountains! No—they are mountains in a sea. And what a sea! Waves of water, when at the prodigious, are never higher than the foretop of a man-of-war. Waves of vapour—they alone are seen flying mountains high — dashing, but howling not — and in their silent ascension, all held together by the same spirit, but perpetually changing its beautiful array, where order seems ever aud anon to come in among disorder, there is a grandeur that settles down in the soul of youthful poet roaming in delirium among the mountain glooms, and "pacifies the fever of his heart."

Call not now these vapours waves; for movement there is none among the ledges, and ridges, and roads,

and avenues, and galleries, and groves, and houses, and churches, and castles, and fairy palaces—all framed of mist. Far up among and above that wondrous region, through which you hear voices of waterfalls deepening the silence, behold hundreds of mountain-tops—blue, purple, violet—for the sun is shining straight on some and aslant on others—and on those not at all; nor can the shepherd at your side, though he has lived among them all his life, till after long pondering tell you the names of those most familiar to him; for they seem to have all interchanged sites and altitudes, and Black Benhun himself, the Eagle-Breeder, looks so serenely in his rainbow, that you might almost mistake him for Ben Louey or the Hill of Hinds.

Have you not seen sunsets in which the mountains were embedded in masses of clouds all burning and blazing—yes, blazing—with unimaginable mixtures of all the colours that ever were born—intensifying into a glory that absolutely became insupportable to the soul as insufferable to the eyes—and that left the eyes for hours after you had retreated from the supernatural scene, even when shut, all filled with floating films of cross-lights, cutting the sky-imagery into gorgeous fragments? And were not the mountains of such sunsets, whether they were of land or of cloud, sufficiently vast for your utmost capacities and powers of delight and joy longing to commune with the Region then felt to be in very truth Heaven? Nor could the spirit, entranced in admiration, conceive at that moment any Heaven beyond—while the senses themselves seemed to have

had given them a revelation, that as it was created could be felt but by an immortal spirit.

It elevates our being to be in the body near the sky—at once on earth and in Heaven. In the body? Yes—we feel at once fettered and free. In Time we wear our fetters, and heavy though they be, and painfully riveted on, seldom do we welcome Death coming to strike them off—but groan at sight of the executioner. In eternity we believe that all is spiritual—and in that belief, which doubt sometimes shakes but to prove that its foundation lies rooted far down below all earthquakes, endurable is the sound of dust to dust. Poets speak of the spirit, while yet in the flesh, blending, mingling, being absorbed in the great forms of the outward universe, and they speak as if such absorption were celestial and divine. But is not this a material creed? Let Imagination beware how she seeks to glorify the objects of the senses, and having glorified them, to elevate them into a kindred being with our own, exalting them that we may claim with them that kindred being, as if we belonged to them and not they to us, forgetting that they are made to perish, we to live for ever!

But let us descend the mountain by the side of this torrent. What a splendid series of translucent pools! We carry the Excursion in our pocket, for the use of our friends; but our own presentation copy is here—we have gotten it by heart. And it does our heart good to hear ourselves recite. Listen ye Naiads to the famous picture of the Ram;—

" Thus having reach'd a bridge, that overarch'd
The hasty rivulet, where it lay becalm'd
In a deep pool, by happy chance we saw
A twofold image; on a grassy bank
A snow-white Ram, and in the crystal flood
Another and the same! Most beautiful
On the green turf, with his imperial front
Shaggy and bold, and wreathed horns superb,
The breathing creature stood; as beautiful
Beneath him, show'd his shadowy counterpart;
Each had his glowing mountains, each his sky,
And each seem'd centre of his own fair world.
Antipodes unconscious of each other,
Yet, in partition, with their several spheres,
Blended in perfect stillness to our sight.
Ah! what a pity were it to disperse
Or to disturb so fair a spectacle,
And yet a breath can do it."

Oh! that the Solitary, and the Pedlar, and the Poet, and the Priest and his Lady, were here to see a sight more glorious far than that illustrious and visionary Ram. Two Christopher Norths—as Highland chieftains—in the Royal Tartan—one burning in the air—the other in the water—two stationary meteors, each seeming native to its own element! This setting the heather, that the linn on fire—this a-blaze with war, that tempered into truce; while the Sun, astonied at the spectacle, nor knowing the refulgent substance from the resplendent shadow, bids the clouds lie still in heaven, and the winds all hold their breath, that exulting nature may be permitted for a little while to enjoy the miracle she unawares has wrought—alas! gone as she gazes, and gone for ever! Our bonnet has tumbled into the Pool—and Christopher—like the Ram in the

Excursion—stands shorn of his beams—no better worth looking at than the late Laird of Macnab.

Now, since the truth must be told, that was but a Flight of Fancy—and our apparel is more like that of a Lowland Quaker than a Highland chief. 'Tis all of a snuffy brown—an excellent colour for hiding the dirt. Single-breasted our coatee—and we are in shorts. Were our name to be imposed by our hat, it would be Sir Cloudesly Shovel. On our back a wallet—and in our hand the Crutch. And thus, not without occasional alarm to the cattle, though we harry no man's, we go stalking along the sward and swinging across the stream, and leaping over the quagmires—by no means unlike that extraordinary pedestrian who has been accompanying us for the last half hour, far overhead up-by yonder, as if he meant mischief; but he will find that we are up to a trick or two, and not easily to be done brown by a native, a Cockney of Cloud-Land, a long-legged awkward fellow with a head like a dragon, and proud of his red plush, in that country called thunder-and-lightning breeches, hot very, one would think, in such sultry weather—but confound us if he has not this moment stript them off, and be not pursuing his journey *in puris naturalibus*—yes, as naked as the minute he was born—our Shadow on the Clouds!

The Picture of the Ram has been declared by sumphs in search of the sublime to border on the Burlesque. They forget that a sumph may just as truly be said to border on a sage. All things in heaven and on earth, mediately and immediately, border on one another—

much depends on the way you look at them—and Poets, who are strange creatures, often love to enjoy and display their power by bringing the burlesque into the region of the sublime. Of what breed was the Tup? Cheviot, Leicester, Southdown? Had he gained the Cup at the Great North Show? We believe not, and that his owner saw in him simply a fine specimen of an ordinary breed—a shapely and useful animal. In size he was not to be named on the same day with the famous Ram of Derby, "whose tail was made a rope, sir, to toll the market-bell." Jason would have thought nothing of him compared with the Golden Fleece. The Sun sees a superior sire of flocks as he enters Aries. Sorry are we to say it, but the truth must be spoken, he was somewhat bandy-legged, and rather coarse in the wool. But heaven, earth, air, and water conspired to glorify him, as the Poet and his friends chanced to come upon him at the Pool, and, more than them all united, the Poet's own soul; and a sheep that would not have sold for fifty shillings, became Lord Paramount of two worlds, his regal mind all the time unconscious of its empiry, and engrossed with the thought of a few score silly ewes.

Seldom have we seen so serene a day. It seems to have lain in one and the same spirit over all the Highlands. We have been wandering since sunrise, and 'tis now near sunset; yet not an hour without a visible heaven in all the Lochs. In the pure element overflowing so many spacious vales and glens profound, the great and stern objects of nature have all day long

been looking more sublime or more beautiful in the reflected shadows, invested with one universal peace. The momentary evanescence of all that imagery at a breath touches us with the thought that all it represents, steadfast as seems its endurance, will as utterly pass away. Such visions when gazed on in that wondrous depth and purity on a still slow-moving day, always inspire some such feeling as this; and we sigh to think how transitory must be all things, when the setting sun is seen to sink behind the mountain, and all the golden pomp at the same instant to evanish from the Loch.

Evening is preparing to let fall her shades—and Nature, cool, fresh, and unwearied, is laying herself down for a few hours' sleep. There had been a long strong summer drought, and a week ago you would have pitied—absolutely pitied the poor Highlands. You missed the cottage-girl with her pitcher at the well in the brae, for the spring scarcely trickled, and the water-cresses were yellow before their time. Many a dancing hill-stream was dead—only here and there one stronger than her sisters attempted a pas-seul over the shelving rocks; but all choral movements and melodies forsook the mountains, still and silent as so much painted canvass. Waterfalls first tamed their thunder, then listened alarmed to their own echoes, wailed themselves away into diminutive murmurs, gasped for life, died, and were buried at the feet of the green slippery precipices. Tarns sank into moors; and there was the voice of weeping heard and low lament among the water-lilies. Ay, millions of pretty flowerets died in

their infancy, even on their mother's breast; the bee fainted in the desert for want of the honey-dew, and the ground-cells of industry were hushed below the heather. Cattle lay lean on the brownness of a hundred hills, and the hoof of the red-deer lost its fleetness. Along the shores of lochs great stones appeared, within what for centuries had been the lowest water-mark; and whole bays, once bright and beautiful with reed-pointed wavelets, became swamps, cracked and seamed, or rustling in the aridity with a useless crop, to the sugh of the passing wind. On the shore of the sea alone, you beheld no change. The tides ebbed and flowed as before—the small billows racing over the silver sands to the same goal of shells, or climbing up to the same wild-flowers that bathe the foundation of some old castle belonging to the ocean.

But the windows of heaven were opened—and, like giants refreshed with mountain-dew, the rivers flung themselves over the cliffs with roars of thunder. The autumnal woods are fresher than those of summer. The mild harvest-moon will yet repair the evil done by the outrageous sun; and, in the gracious after-growth, the green earth far and wide rejoices as in spring. Like people that have hidden themselves in caves when their native land was oppressed, out gush the torrents, and descend with songs to the plain. The hill-country is itself again when it hears the voice of streams. Magnificent army of mists! whose array encompasses islands of the sea, and who still, as thy glorious vanguard keeps deploying among the glens, rollest on in silence more

sublime than the trampling of the feet of horses, or the sound of the wheels of chariots, to the heath-covered mountains of Scotland, we bid thee hail!

In all our wanderings through the Highlands, towards night we have always found ourselves at home. What though no human dwelling was at hand? We cared not—for we could find a bed-room among the casual inclinations of rocks, and of all curtains the wild-brier forms itself into the most gracefully-festooned draperies, letting in green light alone from the intercepted stars. Many a cave we know of—cool by day, and warm by night—how they happen to be so, we cannot tell—where no man but ourselves ever slept, or ever will sleep; and sometimes, on startling a doe at evening in a thicket, we have lain down in her lair, and in our slumbers heard the rain pattering on the roofing birk-tree, but felt not one drop on our face, till at dawning we struck a shower of diamonds from the fragrant tresses. But to-night we shall not need to sleep among the sylvans; for our Tail has pitched our Tent on the Moor—and is now sweeping the mountain with telescope for sight of our descending feet. Hark! signal-gun and bagpipe hail our advent, and the Pyramid brightens in its joy, independent of the sunlight, that has left but one streak in the sky.

THE MOORS.

FLIGHT FIRST.—GLEN-ETIVE.

YES! all we have to do is to let down their lids—to will what our eyes shall see—and, lo! there it is—a creation! Day dawns, and for our delight in soft illumination from the dim obscure floats slowly up a visionary loch—island after island evolving itself into settled stateliness above its trembling shadow, till, from the overpowering beauty of the wide confusion of woods and waters, we seek relief, but find none, in gazing on the sky; for the east is in all the glory of sunrise, and the heads and the names of the mountains are uncertain among the gorgeous colouring of the clouds. Would that we were a painter! Oh! how we should dash on the day and interlace it with night! That chasm should be filled with enduring gloom, thicker and thicker, nor the sun himself suffered to assuage the sullen spirit, now lowering and threatening there, as if portentous of earth-

quake. Danger and fear should be made to hang together for ever on those cliffs, and halfway up the precipice be fixed the restless cloud ascending from the abyss, so that in imagination you could not choose but hear the cataract. The Shadows should seem to be stalking away like evil spirits before angels of light—for at our bidding the Splendours should prevail against them, deploying from the gates of Heaven beneath the banners of morn. Yet the whole picture should be harmonious as a hymn—as a hymn at once sublime and sweet—serene and solemn—nor should it not be felt as even cheerful—and sometimes as if there were about to be merriment in Nature's heart—for the multitude of the isles should rejoice—and the new-woke waters look as if they were waiting for the breezes to enliven them into waves, and wearied of rest to be longing for the motion already beginning to rustle by fits along the silvan shores. Perhaps a deer or two—but we have opened a corner of the fringed curtains of our eyes—the idea is gone—and Turner or Thomson must transfer from our paper to his canvass the imperfect outline—for it is no more—and make us a present of the finished picture.

Strange that with all our love of nature, and of art, we never were a Painter. True that in boyhood we were no contemptible hand at a Lion or a Tiger—and sketches by us of such cats springing or preparing to spring in keelavine, dashed off some fifty or sixty years ago, might well make Edwin Landseer stare. Even yet we are a sort of Salvator Rosa at a savage

scene, and our black-lead pencil heaps up confused shatterings of rocks, and flings a mountainous region into convulsions, as if an earthquake heaved, *in a way that is no canny*, making people shudder as if something had gone wrong with this planet of ours, and creation were falling back into chaos. But we love scenes of beautiful repose too profoundly ever to dream of "transferring them to canvass." Such employment would be felt by us to be desecration—though we look with delight on the work when done by others—the picture without the process—the product of genius without thought of its mortal instruments. We work in words, and words are, in good truth, images, feelings, thoughts; and of these the outer world, as well as the inner is composed, let materialists say what they will. Prose is poetry—we have proved *that* to the satisfaction of all mankind. Look! we beseech you—how a little Loch seems to rise up with its tall heronry—a central isle—and all its silvan braes, till it lies almost on a level with the floor of our Cave, from which in three minutes we could hobble on our crutch down the inclining greensward to the Bay of Waterlilies, and in that canoe be afloat among the Swans. All birches—not any other kind of tree—except a few pines, on whose tops the large nests repose—and here and there a still bird standing as if asleep. What a place for Roes!

The great masters, were their eyes to fall on our idle words, might haply smile—not contemptuously—on our ignorance of art—but graciously on our knowledge of nature. All we have to do, then, is to learn the theory

and practice of art—and assuredly we should forthwith set about doing so, had we any reasonable prospect of living long enough to open an exhibition of pictures from our own easel. As it is, we must be contented with that Gallery, richer than the Louvre, which our imagination has furnished with masterpieces beyond all price or purchase—many of them touched with her own golden finger, the rest the work of high but not superior hands. Imagination, who limns in air, has none of those difficulties to contend with that always beset, and often baffle, artists in oils or waters. At a breath she can modify, alter, obliterate, or restore; at a breath she can colour vacuity with rainbow hues—crown the cliff with its castle—swing the drawbridge over the gulf profound—through a night of woods roll the river along on its moonlit reach—by fragmentary cinctures of mist and cloud, so girdle one mountain that it has the power of a hundred—giant rising above giant, far and wide, as if the mighty multitude, in magnificent and triumphant disorder, were indeed scaling heaven.

To speak more prosaically, every true and accepted lover of nature regards her with a painter's as well as a poet's eye. He breaks not down any scene rudely, and with "many an oft-repeated stroke;" but unconsciously and insensibly he transfigures into Wholes, and all day long, from morn till dewy eve, he is preceded, as he walks along, by landscapes retiring in their perfection, one and all of them the birth of his own inspired spirit. All non-essentials do of themselves drop off and disappear—all the characteristics of the scenery range them-

selves round a centre recognised by the inner sense that cannot err—and thus it is that "beauty pitches her tents before him"—that sublimity companions the pilgrim in the waste wilderness—and grandeur for his sake keeps slowly sailing or settling in the clouds. With such pictures has our Gallery been so thickly hung round for many years, that we have often thought there was not room for one other single frame; yet a vacant space has always been found for every new *chef-d'œuvre* that came to add itself to our collection—and the light from that cupola so distributes itself that it falls wherever it is wanted—wherever it is wanted not how tender the shadow! or how solemn the gloom!

Why, we are now in Glen-Etive—and sitting with our sketch book at the mouth of our Tent. Our oft-repeated passionate prayer,

"O, for a lodge in some vast wilderness!"

has once more, after more than twenty years' absence, in this haunt of our fanciful youth and imaginative manhood, been granted, and Christopher, he thinks, could again bound along these cliffs like a deer. Ay, wellnigh quarter of a century has elapsed since we pitched this selfsame snow-white Tent amid the purple heather, by the Linn of Dee. How fleetly goes winnowing on the air even the weariest waving of Time's care-laden wings! A few yellow weather-stains are on the canvass—but the pole is yet sound—or call it rather mast—for we have hoisted our topgallant,

"And lo! the silver cross, to Scotland dear,"

languidly lifts itself up, an ineffectual streamer, in the fitful morning breezes!

Bold son, or bright daughter of England! hast thou ever seen a SCOTTISH THRISSIL? What height are you—Captain of the Grenadier Guards? "Six feet four on my stocking soles." Poo—a dwarf! Stand up with your back to that stalk. Your head does not reach above his waist—he hangs high over you—"his radious croun of rubies." There's a Flower! dear to Lady Nature above all others, saving and excepting the Rose, and he is the Rose's husband—the Guardian Genii of the land consecrated the Union, and it has been blest. Eyeing the sun like an angry star that will not suffer eclipse either from light or shadow—but burns proudly—fiercely—in its native lustre—storm-brightened, and undishevelled by the tempest in which it swings. See it stoops beneath the blast within reach of your hand. Grasp it ere it recoil aloft; and your hand will be as if it had crushed a sleeping wasp-swarm. But you cannot crush it—to do that would require a giant with an iron glove. Then let it alone to dally with the wind, and the sun, and the rain, and the snow—all alike dear to its spears and rubies; and as you look at the armed lustre, you will see a beautiful emblem and a stately of a people's warlike peace. The stalk indeed is slender, but it sways without danger of breaking in the blast; in the calm it reposes as gently as the gowan at its root. The softest leaf that enfolds in silk the sweetest flower of the garden, not greener than those that sting not if but tenderly you touch them, for they are green as the

garments of the Fairies that dance by moonlight round the Symbol of old Scotland, and unchristened creatures though they the Fairies be, they pray heaven to let fall on the AWFUL THRISSIL all the health and happiness that are in the wholesome stars.

The dawn is softly—slowly—stealing upon day; for the uprisen sun, though here the edge of his disc as yet be invisible, is diffusing abroad "the sweet hour of prime," and all the eastern region is tinged with crimson, faint and fine as that which sleeps within the wreaths of the sea-sounding shells. Hark! the eagle's earliest cry, yet in his eyry. Another hour, and he and his giant mate will be seen spirally ascending the skies, in many a glorious gyration, tutoring their offspring to dally with the sunshine, that when their plumes are stronger, they may dally with the storm. O, Forest of Dalness! how sweet is thy name! Hundreds of red-deer are now lying half-asleep among the fern and heather, with their antlers, could our eyes now behold them, motionless as the birch-tree branches with which they are blended in their lair. At the signal-belling of their king, a hero unconquered in a hundred fights, the whole herd rises at once like a grove, and with their stately heads lifted aloft on the weather-gleam, snuff the sweet scent of the morning air, far and wide surcharged with the honey-dew yet unmelting on the heather, and eye with the looks of liberty the glad daylight that mantles the Black Mount with a many-coloured garment. Ha! the first plunge of the salmon in the Rowan-tree Pool. There again he shoots into the air, white as silver, fresh run from the

sea! For Loch-Etive, you must know, is one of the many million arms of Ocean, and bright now are rolling in the billows of the far-heaving tide. Music meet for such a morn and such mountains. Straight stretches the glen for leagues, and then bending through the blue gloom, seems to wind away with one sweep into infinitude. The Great Glen of Scotland—Glen-More itself—is not grander. But the Great Glen of Scotland is yet a living forest. Glen-Etive has few woods or none—and the want of them is sublime. For centuries ago pines and oaks in the course of nature all perished; and they exist now but in tradition wavering on the tongues of old bards, or deep down in the mosses show their black trunks to the light, when the torrents join the river in spate, and the moor divulges its secrets as in an earthquake. Sweetly sung, thou small, brown, moorland bird, though thy song be but a twitter! And true to thy time—even to a balmy minute—art thou, with thy velvet tunic of black striped with yellow, as thou windest thy small but not sullen horn—by us called in our pride HUMBLE BEE—but not, methinks, so very humble, while booming high in air in oft-repeated circles, wondering at our Tent, and at the flag that now unfolds its gaudy length like a burnished serpent, as if the smell of some far-off darling heather-bed had touched thy finest instinct, away thou fliest straight southward to that rich flower-store, unerringly as the carrier-pigeon wafting to distant lands some love-message on its wings. Yet humble after all thou art; for all day long, making thy industry thy delight, thou returnest at shut of day,

cheerful even in thy weariness, to thy ground-cell within the knoll, where as Fancy dreams the Fairies dwell—a Silent People in the Land of Peace.

And why hast thou, wild singing spirit of the Highland Glenorchy, that cheerest the long-withdrawing vale from Inveruren to Dalmally, and from Dalmally Church-tower to the Old Castle of Kilchurn, round whose mouldering turrets thou sweepest with more pensive murmur, till thy name and existence are lost in that noble loch—why hast thou never had thy Bard? "A hundred bards have I had in bygone ages," is thy reply; "but the Sassenach understands not the traditionary strains, and the music of the Gaelic poetry is wasted on his ear." Songs of war and of love are yet awakened by the shepherds among these lonely braes; and often when the moon rises over Ben Cruachan, and counts her attendant stars in soft reflection beneath the still waters of that long inland sea, she hears the echoes of harps chiming through the silence of departed years. Tradition tells, that on no other banks did the fairies so love to thread the mazes of their mystic dance, as on the heathy, and brackeny, and oaken banks of the Orchy, during the long summer nights when the thick-falling dews perceptibly swelled the stream, and lent a livelier music to every waterfall.

There it was, on a little river island, that once, whether sleeping or waking we know not, we saw celebrated a Fairy's Funeral. First we heard small pipes playing, as if no bigger than hollow rushes that whisper to the night winds; and more piteous than aught that trills

from earthly instrument was the scarce audible dirge! It seemed to float over the stream, every foam-bell emitting a plaintive note, till the airy anthem came floating over our couch, and then alighted without footsteps among the heather. The pattering of little feet was then heard, as if living creatures were arranging themselves in order, and then there was nothing but a more ordered hymn. The harmony was like the melting of musical dewdrops, and sang, without words, of sorrow and death. We opened our eyes, or rather sight came to them when closed, and dream was vision! Hundreds of creatures, no taller than the crest of the lapwing, and all hanging down their veiled heads, stood in a circle on a green plat among the rocks; and in the midst was a bier, framed as it seemed of flowers unknown to the Highland hills; and on the bier a Fairy, lying with uncovered face, pale as the lily, and motionless as the snow. The dirge grew fainter and fainter, and then died quite away; when two of the creatures came from the circle, and took their station, one at the head and the other at the foot of the bier. They sang alternate measures, not louder than the twittering of the awakened wood-lark before it goes up the dewy air, but dolorous and full of the desolation of death. The flower-bier stirred; for the spot on which it lay sank slowly down, and in a few moments the greensward was smooth as ever—the very dews glittering above the buried Fairy. A cloud passed over the moon; and, with a choral lament, the funeral troop sailed duskily away, heard afar off, so still was the midnight solitude of the glen.

Then the disenthralled Orchy began to rejoice as before, through all her streams and falls; and at the sudden leaping of the waters and outbursting of the moon, we awoke.

Age is the season of Imagination, youth of Passion; and having been long young, shall we repine that we are now old? They alone are rich who are full of years —the Lords of Time's Treasury are all on the staff of Wisdom; their commissions are enclosed in furrows on their foreheads, and secured to them for life. Fearless of fate, and far above fortune, they hold their heritage by the great charter of nature for behoof of all her children who have not, like impatient heirs, to wait for their decease; for every hour dispenses their wealth, and their bounty is not a late bequest but a perpetual benefaction. Death but sanctifies their gifts to gratitude; and their worth is more clearly seen and profoundly felt within the solemn gloom of the grave.

And said we truly that Age is the season of Imagination? That Youth is the season of Passion your own beating and bounding hearts now tell you—your own boiling blood. Intensity is its characteristic; and it burns like a flame of fire, too often but to consume. Expansion of the soul is ours, with all its feelings and all its "thoughts, that wander through eternity;" nor needeth then the spirit to have wings, for power is given her, beyond the dove's or the eagle's, and no weariness can touch her on that heavenward flight.

Yet we are all of "the earth earthy," and, young and old alike, must we love and honour our home. Your

eyes are bright—ours are dim; but "it is the soul that sees," and "this diurnal sphere" is visible through the mist of tears. In that light how more than beautiful —how holy—appears even this world! All sadness, save of sin, is then most sacred; and sin itself loses its terrors in repentance, which, alas! is seldom perfect but in the near prospect of dissolution. For temptation may intercept her within a few feet of her expected rest, nay, dash the dust from her hand that she has gathered from the burial-place to strew on her head; but Youth sees flowery fields and shining rivers far-stretching before her path, and cannot imagine for a moment that among life's golden mountains there is many a Place of Tombs!

But let us speak only of this earth—this world—this life—and is not Age the season of Imagination? Imagination is Memory imbued by joy or sorrow with creative power over the past, till it becomes the present, and then, on that vision "far off the coming shines" of the future, till all the spiritual realm overflows with light. Therefore was it that, in illumined Greece, Memory was called the Mother of the Muses; and how divinely indeed they sang around her as she lay in the pensive shade!

You know the words of Milton—

> "Till old experience doth attain
> To something like prophetic strain;"

and you know, while reading them, that Experience is consummate Memory, Imagination wide as the world,

another name for Wisdom, all one with Genius, and in its " prophetic strain"—Inspiration.

We would fain lower our tone—and on this theme speak like what we are, one of the humblest children of Mother Earth. We cannot leap now twenty-three feet on level ground, (our utmost might be twenty-three inches,) nevertheless, we could " put a girdle round the globe in forty minutes,"—ay, in half an hour, were we not unwilling to dispirit Ariel. What are feats done in the flesh and by the muscle? At first—worms though we be—we cannot even crawl;—disdainful next of that acquirement, we creep, and are distanced by the earwig;—pretty lambs, we then totter to the terror of our deep-bosomed dames—till the welkin rings with admiration to behold, sans leading-strings, the weanlings walk;—like wildfire then we run—for we have found the use of our feet;—like wild-geese then we fly—for we may not doubt we have wings;—in car, ship, balloon, the lords of earth, sea, and sky, and universal nature. The car runs on a post—the ship on a rock—the " air hath bubbles as the water hath"—the balloon is one of them, and bursts like a bladder—and we become the prey of sharks, surgeons, or sextons. Where, pray, in all this is there a single symptom or particle of Imagination? It is of Passion " all compact."

True, this is not a finished picture—'tis but a slight sketch of the season of Youth; but paint it as you will, and if faithful to nature you will find Passion in plenty, and a dearth of Imagination. Nor is the season of Youth therefore to be pitied—for Passion respires and expires

in bliss ineffable, and so far from being eloquent as the unwise lecture, it is mute as a fish, and merely gasps. In Youth we are the creatures—the slaves of the senses. But the bondage is borne exultingly in spite of its severity; for erelong we come to discern through the dust of our own raising, the pinnacles of towers and temples serenely ascending into the skies, high and holy places for rule, for rest, or for religion, where as kings we may reign, as priests minister, as saints adore.

We do not deny, excellent youth, that to your eyes and ears beautiful and sublime are the sights and sounds of Nature—and of Art her Angel. Enjoy thy pupilage, as we enjoyed ours, and deliver thyself up withouten dread, or with a holy dread, to the gloom of woods, where night for ever dwells—to the glory of skies, where morn seems enthroned for ever. Coming and going a thousand and a thousand times, yet, in its familiar beauty, ever new as a dream—let thy soul span the heavens with the rainbow. Ask thy heart in the wilderness if that "thunder, heard remote," be from cloud or cataract; and ere it can reply, it may shudder at the shuddering moor, and your flesh creep upon your bones, as the heather seems to creep on the bent, with the awe of a passing earthquake. Let the sea-mew be thy guide up the glen, if thy delight be in peace profounder than ever sat with her on the lull of summer waves! For the inland loch seems but a vale overflowing with wondrous light—and realities they all look—these trees and pastures, and rocks and hills, and clouds—not softened images, as they are, of realities that are almost stern even in their beauty,

and in their sublimity overawing; look at yon precipice that dwindles into pebbles the granite blocks that choke up the shore!

Now all this, and a million times more than all this, have we too done in our Youth, and yet 'tis all nothing to what we do whenever we will it in our Age. For almost all *that* is passion; spiritual passion indeed—and as all emotions are akin, they all work with, and into one another's hands, and, however remotely related, recognize and welcome one another, like Highland cousins, whenever they meet. Imagination is not the Faculty to stand aloof from the rest, but gives the one hand to Fancy and the other to Feeling, and *sets* to Passion, who is often so swallowed up in himself as to seem blind to their *vis-a-vis*, till all at once he hugs all the Three, as if he were demented, and as suddenly sporting *dos-a-dos*—is off on a gallopade by himself right slick away over the mountain-tops.

To the senses of a schoolboy a green sour crab is as a golden pippin, more delicious than any pine-apple—the tree which he climbs to pluck it seems to grow in the garden of Eden—and the parish—moorland though it be—over which he is let loose to play—Paradise. It is barely possible there may be such a substance as matter, but all its qualities worth having are given it by mind. By a necessity of nature, then, we are all poets. We all make the food we feed on; nor is jealousy, the green-eyed monster, the only wretch who discolours and deforms. Every evil thought does do — every good thought gives fresh lustre to the grass—to the flowers—

to the stars. And as the faculties of sense, after becoming finer and more fine, do then, because that they are earthly, gradually lose their power, the faculties of the soul, because that they are heavenly, become then more and more and more independent of such ministrations, and continue to deal with images, and with ideas which are diviner than images, nor care for either partial or total eclipse of the daylight, conversant as they are, and familiar with a more resplendent—a spiritual universe.

You still look incredulous and unconvinced of the truth of our position—but it was established in our first three paragraphs; and the rest, though proofs too, are intended merely for illustrations. Age alone understands the language of old Mother Earth—for Age alone, from his own experience, can imagine its meanings in trouble or in rest—often mysterious enough even to him in all conscience—but intelligible though inarticulate—nor always inarticulate; for though sobs and sighs are rife, and whispers and murmurs, and groans and gurgling, yea, sometimes yells and cries, as if the old Earth were undergoing a violent death—yet many a time and oft, within these few years, have we heard her slowly syllabling words out of the Bible, and as in listening we looked up to the sky, the fixed stars responded to their truth, and, like Mercy visiting Despair, the Moon bore it into the heart of the stormy clouds.

And are there not now—have there never been young Poets? Many; for Passion, so tossed as to leave, perhaps to give, the sufferer power to reflect on his ecstasy, grows poetical because creative, and loves to express

itself in "prose or numerous verse," at once its nutriment and relief. Nay, Nature sometimes gifts her children with an imaginative spirit, that, from slight experiences of passion, rejoices to idealize intentions, and incidents, and characters all coloured by it, or subject to its sway; and these are Poets, not with old heads on young shoulders, but with old hearts in young bosoms; yet such premature genius seldom escapes blight, the very springs of life are troubled, and its possessor sinks, pines, fades, and dies. So was it with Chatterton and Keates.

It may be, after all, that we have only proved Age to be the strongest season of Imagination; and if so, we have proved all we wish, for we seek not to deny, but to vindicate. Knowledge is power to the poet as it is power to all men—and indeed without Art and Science what is Poetry? Without cultivation the faculty divine can have but imperfect vision. The inner eye is dependent on the outward eye long familiar with material objects —a finer sense, cognizant of spiritualities, but acquired by the soul from constant communion with shadows—innate the capacity, but awakened into power by gracious intercourse with Nature. Thus Milton *saw*—after he became blind.

But know that Age is not made up of a multitude of years—though that be the vulgar reckoning—but of a multitude of experiences; and that a man at thirty, if good for much, must be old. How long he may continue in the prime of Age, God decrees; many men of the most magnificent minds—for example, Michael Angelo

—have been all-glorious in power and majesty at four-score and upwards; but one drop of water on the brain can at any hour make it barren as desert dust. So can great griefs.

Yestreen we had rather a hard bout of it in the Tent—the Glenlivet was pithy—and our Tail sustained a total overthrow. They are snoring as if it still were midnight. And is it thus that we sportsmen spend our time on the Moors? Yet while "so many of our poorest subjects are yet asleep," let us repoint the nib of our pen, and in the eye of the sweet-breath'd morning—moralize.

Wellnigh quarter a century, we said, is over and gone since by the Linn of Dee we pitched—on that famous excursion—THE TENT. Then was the genesis of that white witch Maga.

"Like some tall Palm her noiseless fabric grew!"

Nay, not noiseless—for the deafest wight that ever strove to hear with his mouth wide open, might have sworn that he heard the sound of ten thousand hammers. Neither grew she like a Palm—but like a Banyan-tree. Ever as she threw forth branches from her great unexhausted stem, they were borne down by the weight of their own beauty to the soil—the deep, black rich soil in which she grew, originally sown there by a bird of Paradise, that dropt the seed from her beak as she sailed along in the sunshiny ether—and every limberest spray there again taking root, reascended a stately scion, and so on ceaselessly through all the hours, each in itself a spring-season, till the figurative words of Milton have been fulfilled—

——" Her arms
Branching so broad and long, that in the ground
The bended twigs take root, and daughters grow
About the mother tree, a pillar'd shade
High overarch'd, and echoing walks between;
There oft the Ettrick Shepherd, shunning heat,
Shelters in cool, and tends his pasturing herds
At loopholes cut through thickest shade."

But, alas! for the Odontist! He, the "*Deliciæ generis Humani*," is dead. The best of all the Bishops of Bristol is no more. Mansel had not a tithe of his wit—nor Kaye a tithe of his wisdom. And can it be that we have not yet edited "His Remains!" "Alas! poor Yorick!" If Hamlet could smile even with the skull of the Jester in his hands, whom when a princely boy he had loved, hanging on his neck many a thousand times, why may not we, in our mind's eye seeing that mirthful face "quite chap-fallen," and hearing as if dismally deadened by the dust, the voice that "so often set our table on a roar!" Dr Parr's wig, too, is all out of frizzle; a heavier shot has dishevelled its horsehair than ever was sent from the Shepherd's gun; no more shall it be mistaken for owl a-blink on the mid-day bough, or ptarmigan basking in the sun high up among the regions of the snow. It has vanished, with other lost things, to the Moon; and its image alone remains for the next edition of the celebrated treatise "*De Rebus Deperditis*," a suitable and a welcome frontispiece, transferred thither by the engraver's cunning from the first of those Eight Tomes that might make the Trone tremble, laid on the shoulders of Atlas who

threatens to put down the Globe, by the least judicious and the most unmerciful of editors that ever imposed upon the light living the heavy dead—John Johnson, late of Birmingham, Fellow of the Royal Society, and of the Royal College of Physicians, whose practice is duller than that of all Death's doctors, and his prescriptions in that preface unchristianly severe. O'Doherty, likewise, has been gathered to his fathers. The Standard-bearer has lowered his colours before the foe who alone is invincible. The Ensign, let us not fear, has been advanced to a company without purchase, in the Celestials; the Adjutant has got a Staff appointment. Tims was lately rumoured to be in a galloping consumption; but the very terms of the report, about one so sedentary, were sufficient to give it the lie. Though puny, he is far from being unwell; and still engaged in polishing tea-spoons and other plated articles, at a rate cheaper than travelling gipsies do horn. Prince Leopold is now King of the Belgians——but we must put an end in the Tent to that portentous snore.

"Arise, awake, or be for ever fallen!"

Ho—ho! gentlemen—so you have had the precaution to sleep in your clothes. The sun, like Maga, is mounting higher and higher in heaven; so let us, we beseech you, to breakfast, and then off to the Moors.

"Substantial breakfast!" by Dugald Dhu, and by Donald Roy, and by Hamish Bhan—heaped up like icebergs round the pole. How nobly stands in the centre that ten-gallon Cask of Glenlivet! Proud is that Round to

court his shade. That twenty-pound Salmon lies beneath it even as yesterday he lay beneath the cliff, while a column of light falls from him on that Grouse-Pie. Is not that Ham beautiful in the calm consciousness of his protection? That Tongue mutely eloquent in his praise? Tap him with your knuckles, tenderly as if you loved him—and that with all your heart and soul you do—and is not the response firm as from the trunk of the gnarled oak? He is yet "Virgin of Proserpina"—"by Jove" he is; no wanton lip has ever touched his mouth so chaste; so knock out the bung, and let us hear him gurgle. With diviner music does he fill the pitcher, and with a diviner liquidity of light than did ever Naiad from fount of Helicon or Castaly, pour into classic urn gracefully uplifted by Grecian damsel to her graceful head, and borne away, with a thanksgiving hymn, to her bower in the olive-grove.

All eggs are good eating; and 'tis a vulgar heresy which holds that those laid by sea-fowl have a fishy taste. The egg of the Sea-mew is exceeding sweet; so is that of the Gull. Pleasant is even the yoke of the Cormorant—in the north of England ycleped the Scarth, and in the Lowlands of Scotland the Black Byuter. Try a Black Byuter's egg, my dear boy; for though not newly laid, it has since May been preserved in butter, and is as fresh as a daisy after a shower. Do not be afraid of stumbling on a brace of embryo Black Byuters in the interior of the globe, for by its weight we pronounce it an egg in no peril of parturition. You may now smack your lips, loud as if you were smacking

your palms, for that yellow morsel was unknown to Vitellius. Don't crush the shell, but throw it into the Etive, that the Fairies may find it at night, and go dancing in the fragile but buoyant canoe, in fits of small shrill laughter, along with the foam-bells over the ebb-tide Rapids above Connal's raging Ferry.

The salmon is in shivers, and the grouse-pie has vanished like a dream.

> " So fades, so languishes, grows dim, and dies,
> All that this world is proud of!"

Only a goose remains! and would that he too were gone to return no more; for he makes us an old man. No tradition survives in the Glen of the era at which he first flourished. He seems to have belonged to some tribe of the Anseres now extinct; and as for his own single individual self, our senses tell us, in a language not to be misinterpreted, that he must have become defunct in the darkness of antiquity. But nothing can be too old for a devil—so at supper let us rectify him in Cayenne.

Oh! for David Wilkie, or William Simpson, (while we send Gibb to bring away younder Shieling and its cliff,) to paint a picture—coloured, if possible, from the life—of the Interior of our airy Pyramid. Door open, and perpendicular canvass walls folded up—that settled but cloudy sky, with here its broad blue fields, and there its broad blue glimpsing glades—this greensward mound in the midst of a wilderness of rock-strewn heather—as much of that one mountain, and as many of those others, as it can be made to hold—that bright

bend of the river—a silver bow-—and that white-sanded, shelly, shingly shore at Loch-Etive Head, on which a troop of Tritons are "charging with all their chivalry," still driven back and still returning, to the sound of trumpets, of "flutes and soft recorders," from the sea. On the table, all strewn and scattered "in confusion worse confounded," round the Cask, which

——"dilated stands
Like Teneriffe or Atlas *unremoved*,"

what "buttery touches" might be given to the

——"reliquias Danaum atque inmitis Achillei!"

Then the camp-beds tidily covered and arranged along their own department of the circle—quaint dresses hanging from loops, all the various apparelling of hunter, shooter, fisher, and forester—rods, baskets, and nets occupying their picturesque division—fowling-pieces, double and single, rejoicing through the oil-smooth brownness of their barrels in the exquisite workmanship of a Manton and a Lancaster—American rifles, with their stocks more richly silver-chased than you could have thought within reach of the arts in that young and prosperous land—duck-guns, whose formidable and fatal length had in Lincolnshire often swept the fens—and on each side of the door, a brass carronade on idle hours to awaken the echoes—sitting erect on their hurdies, deer-hound, greyhound, lurcher, pointer, setter, spaniel, varmint, and though last, not least, O'Bronte watching Christopher with his steadfast eyes, slightly raised his large hanging triangular ears, his Thessalian

bull dewlaps betokening keen anxiety to be off and away to the mountain, and with a full view of the white star on his coal-black breast,—

"Plaided and plumed in their tartan array"

our three chosen Highlanders, chosen for their strength and their fleetness from among the prime Children of the Mist—and Tickler the Tall, who keeps growing after threescore and ten like a stripling, and leaves his mark within a few inches of the top of the pole, arrayed in tights of Kendal green, bright from the skylight of the inimitable Vallance or the matchless Williams—green too his vest, and green also his tunic—while a green feather in a green bonnet dances in its airy splendour, and gold button-holes give at once lustre and relief to the glowing verdure, (such was Little John, when arrayed in all his glory, to walk behind Robin Hood and Maid Marian, as they glided from tree to tree, in wait for the fallow-deer in merry Sherwood,)—North in his Quaker garb—Quaker-like all but in cuffs and flaps, which, when he goes to the Forest, are not—North, with a figure combining in itself all the strength of a William Pen, sans its corpulency, all the agility of a Jem Belcher with far more than a Jem Belcher's bottom—with a face exhibiting in rarest union all the philosophy of a Bacon, the benevolence of a Howard, the wisdom of a Wordsworth, the fire of a Byron, the gnosticity of a John Bee, and the up-to-trappishness combined not only with perfect honesty, but with honour bright, of the Sporting Editor of

Bell's Life in London—and then, why if Wilkie or Simpson fail in making a GEM of all that, they are not the men of genius we took them for, that is all, and the art must be at a low ebb indeed in these kingdoms.

Well, our Tail has taken wings to itself and flown away with Dugald Dhu and Donald Roy; and we, with Hamish Bhan, with Ponto, Piro, Basta, and O'Bronte, are left by ourselves in the Tent. Before we proceed farther, it may not be much amiss to turn up our little fingers—yestreen we were all a leetle opstropelous—and spermaceti is not a more "sovereign remedy for an inward bruise," than is a hair from the dog's tail that bit you an antidote to any pus that produces rabies in the shape of hydrophobia. Fill up the quech, Hamish! a caulker of Milbank can harm no man at any hour of the day—at least in the Highlands. Sma' Stell, Hamish—assuredly Sma' Stell!

Ere we start, Hamish, play us a Gathering—and then a Pibroch. "The Campbells are coming" is like a storm from the mountain sweeping Glen-More, that roars beneath the hastening hurricane with all its woods. No earthquake like that which accompanies the trampling of ten thousand men. So, round that shoulder, Hamish—and away for a mile up the Glen—then, turning on your heel, blow till proud might be the mother that bore you; and from the Tent-mouth Christopher will keep smart fire from his Pattereroes, answered by all the echoes. Hamish—indeed

"The dun-deer's hide
On swifter foot was never tied—"

for even now as that cloud—rather thunderous in his aspect—settles himself over the Tent—ere five minutes have elapsed—a mile off is the sullen sound of the bagpipe!—music which, if it rouse you not when heard among the mountains, may you henceforth confine yourself to the Jew's harp. Ay, here's a claymore—let us fling away the scabbard—and in upon the front rank of the bayoneted muskets, till the Saxon array reels, or falls just where it has been standing, like a swathe of grass. So swept of old the Highlanders—shepherds and herdsmen—down the wooded cliffs of the pass of Killiekrankie, till Mackay's red-coats lay redder in blood among the heather, or passed away like the lurid fragments of a cloud. "The Campbell's are coming"—and we will charge with the heroes in the van. The whole clan is maddening along the Moor—and Maccallum More himself is at their head. But we beseech you, O'Bronte! not to look so like a lion—and to hush in your throat and breast that truly Leonine growl—for after all, 'tis but a bagpipe with ribands

"Streaming like meteors to the troubled air,"

and all our martial enthusiasm has evaporated in—wind.

But let us inspect Brown Bess. Till sixty, we used a single barrel. At seventy we took to a double;—but dang detonators—we stick to the flint. "Flint," says Colonel Hawker, "shoots strongest into the bird." A percussion-gun is quicker, but flint is fast enough; and it does, indeed, argue rather a confusion than a rapidity of ideas, to find fault with lightning for being too slow.

With respect to the flash in the pan, it is but a fair warning to ducks, for example, to dive if they can, and get out of the way of mischief. It is giving birds a chance for their lives, and is it not ungenerous to grudge it? When our gun goes to our shoulder, that chance is but small; for with double-barrel Brown Bess, it is but a word and a blow,—the blow first, and long before you could say Jack Robinson, the gorcock plays thud on the heather. But we beg leave to set the question at rest for ever by one single clencher. We have killed fifty birds—grouse—at fifty successive shots—one bird only to the shot. And mind, not mere pouts—cheepers—for we are no chicken-butchers—but all thumpers—cocks and hens as big as their parents, and the parents themselves likewise; not one of which fell *out of bounds*, (to borrow a phrase from the somewhat silly though skilful pastime of pigeon-shooting,) except one that suddenly soared halfway up to the moon, and then

> "Into such strange vagaries fell
> As he would dance,"

and tumbled down stone-dead into a loch. Now, what more could have done a detonator in the hands of the devil himself? Satan might have shot as well, perhaps, as Christopher North—better we defy him; and we cannot doubt that his detonator—given to him in a present, we believe, by Joe Manton—is a prime article—one of the best ever manufactured on the percussion system. But what more could he have done? When we had killed our fiftieth bird in style, we put it to the Christian reader, would not the odds have been six to four

on the flint? And would not Satan, at the close of the match, ten birds behind perhaps, and with a bag shamefully rich in poor pouts, that would have fallen to the ground had he but thrown salt on their tails, have looked excessively sheepish? True, that in rain or snow the percussion-lock will act, from its detonating power, more correctly than the common flint-lock, which, begging its pardon, will then often not act at all; but that is its only advantage, and we confess a great one, especially in Scotland, where it is a libel on the country to say that it always rains, for it almost as often snows. However, spite of wind and weather, we are faithful to flint; nor shall any newfangled invention, howsoever ingenious, wean us from our First Love.

Let not youthful or middle-aged sportsmen—in whose veins the blood yet gallops, canters, or trots—despise us, Monsieur Vieillard, in whose veins the blood creeps like a wearied pedestrian at twilight hardly able to hobble into the wayside inn—for thus so long preferring the steel-pen to the steel barrel, (the style of both is equally polished)—our Bramah to our Manton. Those two wild young fellows, Tickler and the Admiral, whose united ages amount to little more than a century and a half, are already slaughtering their way along the mountain side, the one on Bauchaille Etive, and the other on the Black Mount. But we love not to commit murder long before meridian—"gentle lover of Nature" as we are; so, in spite of the scorn of the more passionate sportsman, we shall continue for an hour or two longer inditing, ever and anon lifting our eyes from whitey-

brown paper to whitey-blue sky, from memorandum-book to mountain, from inkbottle to loch, and delight ourselves, and perchance a few thousand others, by a waking-dream description of Glen-Etive.

'Tis a vast Glen. Not one single human dwelling any where speck-like on the river-winding plain—or nest-like among the brushwood knolls—or rock-like among the fractured cliffs far up on the mountain region do our eyes behold, eager as they are to discover some symptom of life. Two houses we know to be in the solitude—ay, two—one of them near the head of the Loch, and the other near the head of the Glen—but both distant from this our Tent, which is pitched between, in the very heart of the Moor. We were mistaken in saying that Dalness is invisible—for yonder it looms in a sullen light, and before we have finished the sentence, may have again sunk into the moor. Ay, it is gone—for lights and shadows coming and going, we know not whence nor whither, here travel all day long—the sole tenants—very ghostlike—and seemingly in their shiftings embued with a sort of dim uncertain life. How far off from our Tent may be the Loch? Miles—and silently as snow are seen to break the waves along the shore, while beyond them hangs in aerial haze, the great blue water. How far off from our Tent may be the mountains at the head of the Glen? Miles—for though that speck in the sky into which they upheave their mighty altitudes, be doubtless an eagle, we cannot hear its cry. What giants are these right opposite our Pyramid? Co—grim chieftain—and his

Tail. What an assemblage of thunder-riven cliffs! This is what may be well called—Nature on a grand scale. And then, how simple! We begin to feel ourselves—in spite of all we can do to support our dignity by our pride—a mighty small and insignificant personage. We are about six feet high—and every body around us about four thousand. Yes, that is the Four Thousand Feet Club! We had no idea that in any situation we could be such dwindled dwarfs, such perfect pigmies. Our Tent is about as big as a fir-cone—and Christopher North an insect!

What a wild world of clouds all over that vast central wilderness of Northern Argyleshire lying between Cruachan and Melnatorran—Corryfinuarach and Ben Slarive a prodigious land! defying description, and in memory resembling not realities, but like fragments of tremendous dreams. Is it a sterile region? Very. In places nothing but stones. Not a blade of grass—not a bent of heather—not even moss. And so they go shouldering up into the sky—enormous masses—huger than churches or ships. And sometimes not unlike such and other structures—all huddled together—yet never jostling, so far as we have seen; and though often overhanging, as if the wind might blow them over with a puff, steadfast in the storm that seems rather to be an earthquake, and moving not a hair's-breadth, while all the shingly sides of the mountains—you know shingle—with an inconstant clatter—hurry-skurry—seem to be breaking up into debris.

Is that the character of the whole region? No, you darling; it has vales on vales of emerald, and mountains

on mountains of amethyst, and streams on streams of silver; and, so help us Heaven!—for with these eyes we have seen them, a thousand and a thousand times—at sunrise and sunset, rivers on rivers of gold. What kind of climate? All kinds, and all kinds at once—not merely during the same season, but the same hour. Suppose it three o'clock of a summer afternoon—you have but to choose your weather. Do you desire a close sultry breathless gloom? You have it in the stifling dens of Ben-Anēa, where lions might breed. A breezy coolness, with a sprinkling of rain? Then open your vest to the green light in the dewy vales of Benlūra. Lochs look lovely in mist, and so thinks the rainbow—then away with you ere the rainbow fade—away, we beseech you, to the wild shores of Lochan-a-Lūrich. But you would rather see a storm, and hear some Highland thunder? There is one at this moment on Unimore, and Cruachlīa growls to Meallanuir, till the cataracts of Glashgour are dumb as the dry rocks of Craig-Teōnan.

In those regions we were when a boy initiated into the highest mysteries of the Highlands. No guide dogged our steps—as well might a red deer have asked a cur to show him the Forest of Braemar, or Beniglo—an eagle where best to build his eyry have advised with the Glasgow Gander. O heavens! how we were bewildered among the vast objects that fed that delirium of our boyhood! We dimly recognized faces of cliffs wearing dreadful frowns; blind though they looked, they seemed sensible of our approach; and we heard

one horrid monster mutter, "What brings thee here, infatuated Pech—begone!" At his impotent malice we could not choose but smile, and shook our staff at the blockhead, as since at many a greater blockhead even than he have we shook—and more than shook our Crutch. But as through "pastures green and quiet waters by," we pursued, from sunrise to sunset, our uncompanioned way, some sweet spot, surrounded by heather, and shaded by fern, would woo us to lie down on its bosom, and enjoy a visionary sleep! Then it was that the mountains confidentially told us their names—and we got them all by heart; for each name characterized its owner by some of his peculiar and prominent qualities—as if they had been one and all christened by poets baptizing them from a font.

"Translucent, pure,
With touch ethereal of heaven's fiery rod."

O! happy pastor of a peaceful flock! Thou hast long gone to thy reward! One—two—three—four successors hast thou had in that manse—(now it too has been taken down and the plough gone over it)—and they all did their duty; yet still is thy memory fragrant in the glen; for deeds like thine "smell sweet, and blossom in the dust!" Under heaven, we owed our life to thy care of us in a brain fever. Sometimes thy face would grow grave, never angry, at our sallies—follies—call them what you will, but not sins. And methinks we hear the mild old man somewhat mournfully saying, "Mad boy! out of gladness often cometh grief—out of mirth

misery; but our prayers, when thou leavest us, shall be, that never, never, may such be thy fate!" Were those prayers heard in heaven and granted on earth? We ask our heart in awe, but its depths are silent, and make no response.

But is it our intention to sit scribbling here all day? Our fancy lets our feet enjoy their sinecure, and they stretch themselves out in indolent longitude beneath the Tent-table, while we are settled in spirit, a silent thought, on the battlements of our cloud-castle on the summit of Cruachan. What a prospect! Our cloud-castle rests upon a foundation of granite precipices; and down along their hundred chasms, from which the eye recoils, we look on Loch-Etive bearing on its bosom stationary—so it seems in the sunshine—one snow-white sail! What brings the creature there—and on what errand may she be voyaging up the uninhabited sea-arm that stretches away into the uninhabited mountains? Some poet, perhaps, steers her—sitting at the helm in a dream, and allowing her to dance her own way, at her own will, up and down the green glens and hills of the foam-crested waves—a swell rolling in the beauty of light and music for ever attendant on her, as the Sea-mew—for so we choose to name her—pursues her voyage—now on water, and now, as the breezes drop, in the air—elements at times undistinguishable, as the shadows of the clouds and of the mountains mingle their imagery in the sea. Oh! that our head, like that of a spider, were all studded with eyes—that our imagination, sitting in the "palace of the soul," (a noble expression, borrowed or stolen by Byron

from Waller,) might see all at once all the sights from centre to circumference, as if all rallying around her for her own delight, and oppressing her with the poetry of nature—a lyrical, an elegiac, an epic, or a tragic strain. Now the bright blue water-gleams enchain her vision, and are felt to constitute the vital, the essential spirit of the whole—Loch Awe land-serpent, large as serpent of the sea, lying asleep in the sun, with his burnished skin all bedropt with scales of silver and of gold—the lands of Lorn, mottled and speckled with innumerous lakelets, where fancy sees millions of water-lilies riding at anchor in bays where the breezes have fallen asleep—Oban, splendid among the splendours of that now almost motionless mediterranean, the mountain-loving Linnhe Loch—Jura, Isla, Colonsay, and nameless other islands, floating far and wide away on—on to Coll and Tiree, drowned beneath the faint horizon. But now all the eyes in our spider-head are lost in one blaze of undistinguishable glory; for the whole Highlands of Scotland are up in their power against us—rivers, lochs, seas, islands, cliffs, clouds, and mountains. The pen drops from our hand, and here we are—not on the battlements of the air-palace on the summit of Cruachan—but sitting on a tripod or three-legged stool at the mouth of our Tent, with our MS. before us, and at our right hand a quech of Glenlivet, fresh drawn from yonder ten-gallon cask—and here's to the health of "Honest men and bonny lasses" all over the globe.

So much for description—an art in which the Public (God bless her, where is she now—and shall we ever

see her more?) has been often pleased to say that we excel. But let us off to the Moor. Piro! Ponto! Basta! to your paws, and O'Bronte, unfurl your tail to heaven. Pointers! ye are a noble trio. White, O Ponto! art thou as the foam of the sea. Piro! thou tan of all tans! red art thou as the dun-deer's hide, and fleet as he while thou rangest the mountain brow, now hid in heather, and now re-appearing over the rocks. Waur hawk, Basta!—for finest-scented though be thy scarlet nostrils, one bad trick alone hast thou; and whenever that grey wing glances from some pillar-stone in the wilderness, headlong goest thou, O lawless negro! But behave thyself to-day, Basta! and let the kestrel unheeded sail or sun herself on the cliff. As for thee, O'Bronte! the sable dog with the star-bright breast, keep thou like a serf at our heels, and when our course lies over the fens and marshes, thou mayst sweep like a hairy hurricane among the flappers, and haply to-day grip the old drake himself, and with thy fan-like tail proudly spread in the wind, deposit at thy master's feet, with a smile, the monstrous mallard.

But in what direction shall we go, callants—towards what airt shall we turn our faces? Over yonder cliffs shall we ascend, and descend into Glen-Creran, where the stony regions that the ptarmigan love melts away into miles of tne grousey heather, which, ere we near the salmon-haunted Loch so beautiful, loses itself in woods that mellow all the heights of Glen Ure and Fasnacloigh with silvan shades, wherein the cushat coos, and the roe glides through the secret covert? Or shall we away up

by Kinloch-Etive, and Melnatorran, and Mealgayre, into the Solitude of Streams, that from all their lofty sources down to the far-distant Loch have never yet brooked, nor will they ever brook, the bondage of bridges, save of some huge stone flung across some chasm, or trunk of a tree—none but trunks of trees there, and all dead for centuries—that had sunk down where it grew, and spanned the flood that eddies round it with a louder music? Wild region! yet not barren; for there are cattle on a thousand hills, that, wild as the very red-deer, toss their heads as they snuff the feet of rarest stranger, and form round him in a half-alarmed and half-threatening crescent. There flocks of goats—outliers from Dalness—may be seen as if following one another on the very air, along the lichen-stained cliffs that frown down unfathomed abysses—and there is frequent heard the whirring of the gorcock's wing, and his gobble gathering together his brood, scattered by the lightning that in its season volleys through the silence, else far deeper than that of death;—for the silence of death—that is, of a churchyard filled with tombs—is nothing to the austerity of the noiselessness that prevails under the shadow of Unimore and Attchorachan, with their cliffs on which the storms have engraven strange hieroglyphical inscriptions, which, could but we read them wisely, would record the successive ages of the Earth, from the hour when fire or flood first moulded the mountains, down to the very moment that we are speaking, and with small steel-hammer roughening the edges of our flints that they may fail not to murder. Or shall we away

down by Armaddy, where the Fox-Hunter dwells—and through the woods of Inverkinglass and Achran, "double, double, toil and trouble" overcome the braes of Benanea and Mealcopucaich, and drop down like two unwearied eagles into Glen-Scrae, with a peep in the distance of the young tower of Dalmally, and the old turrets of Kilchurn? Rich and rare is the shooting-ground, Hamish, which by that route lies between this our Tent and the many tarns that freshen the wildernesses of Lochanancrioch. Say the word—tip the wink—tongue on your cheek—up with your forefinger—and we shall go; for hark, Hamish, our chronometer chimes eight—a long day is yet before us—and what if we be benighted? We have a full moon and plenty of stars.

All these are splendid schemes—but what say you, Hamish, to one less ambitious, and better adapted to Old Kit? Let us beat all the best bits down by Armaddy—the Forge—Gleno, and Inveraw. We may do that well in some six or seven hours—and then let us try that famous salmon-cast nearest the mansion—(you have the rods?)—and if time permit, an hour's trolling in Loch Awe, below the Pass of the Brander, for one of those giants that have immortalized the names of a Maule, a Goldie, and a Wilson. Mercy on us, Shelty, what a beard! You cannot have been shaved since Whitsunday—and never saw we such lengthy love-locks as those dangling at your heels. But let us mount, old Surefoot—mulish in nought but an inveterate aver-

sion to all stumbling. And now for the heather! But are you sure, gents, *that we are on?*

And has it come to this! Where is the grandson of the desert-born?

Thirty years ago, and thou Filho da Puta wert a flyer! A fencer beyond compare! Dost thou remember how, for a cool five hundred, thou clearedst yon canal in a style that rivalled that of the red-deer across the chasms of Cairngorm? All we had to do, was to hold hard and not ride over the hounds, when running breast-high on the rear of Reynard the savage pack wakened the welkin with the tumultuous hubbub of their death-cry, and whipper-in and huntsmen were flogging on their faltering flight in vain through fields and forests flying behind thy heels that glanced and glittered in the frosty sunshine. What steed like thee in all Britain at a steeple chase? Thy hoofs scorned the strong stubble, and skimmed the deep fallows, in which all other horses—heavy there as dragoons—seemed fetlock-bound, or laboured on in staggerings, soil-sunk to the knees. Ditches dwindled beneath thy bounds, and rivulets were as rills; or if in flood they rudely overran their banks, into the spate plunged thy sixteen hands and a-half height, like a Polar monster leaping from an iceberg into the sea, and then lifting up thy small head and fine neck and high shoulder, like a Draco from the welter-ing waters, with a few proud pawings to which the re-covered greensward rang, thy whole bold, bright-brown bulk reappeared on the bank, crested by old Christo-

pher, and after one short snorting pause, over the miry meadows—tantivy !—tantivy !—away ! away ! away !

Oh ! son of a Rep ! were not those glorious days? But Time has laid his finger on us both, Filho; and never more must we two be seen by the edge of the cover,

> " When first the hunter's startling horn is heard
> Upon the golden hills."

'Tis the last learned and highest lesson of Wisdom, Filho, in man's studious obedience to Nature's laws—*to know when to stop in his career.* Pride, Passion, Pleasure, all urge him on; while Prudence, Propriety, Peace, cry halt ! halt ! halt ! That mandate we have timeously obeyed; and having, unblamed we hope, and blameless, carried on the pastimes of youth into manhood, and even through the prime of manhood to the verge of age—on that verge, after some few farewell vagaries up and down the debatable land, we had the resolution to drop our bridle-hand, to unloosen the spurs from our heels, and to dismount from the stateliest and swiftest steed, Filho, that ever wafted mortal man over moor and mountain like a storm-driven cloud.

You are sure *we are on*, Hamish? And that he will not run away? Come, come Surefoot, none of your funking ! A better mane for holding on by we could not imagine. Pure Shelty you say, Hamish? From his ears we should have suspected his grandfather of having been at least a Zebra.

THE MOORS.

FLIGHT SECOND—THE COVES OF CRUACHAN.

COMMA—semicolon—colon—full-point! All three scent-struck into attitude steady as stones. That is beautiful. Ponto straight as a rod—Piro in a slight curve—and Basta a perfect semicircle. O'Bronte! down on your marrowbones. But there is no need, Hamish, either for hurry or haste. On such ground, and on such a day, the birds will lie as if they were asleep. Hamish, the flask!—not the powder-flask, you dotterel—but the Glenlivet. 'Tis thus we always love to steady our hand for the first shot. It gives a fine feeling to the forefinger.

Ha! the heads of the old cock and hen, like snakes, above the heather—motionless, but with glancing eyes—and preparing for the spring. Whirr—whirr—whirr—bang—bang—tapsilleery—tapsalteery—thud—thud—thud! Old cock and old hen both down, Hamish. No

mean omen, no awkward augury, of the day's sport. Now for the orphan family—marked ye them round

" The swelling instep of the mountain's foot ? "

" Faith and she's the teevil's nainsel—that is she—at the shutin'; for may I tine ma mull, and never pree sneeshin' mair, if she hae na richt and left murdered fowre o' the creturs !"—" Four !—why we only covered the old people; but if younkers will cross, 'tis their own fault that they bite the heather."—" They're a' fowre spewin', sir, except ane—and her's head's aff—and she's jumpin' about waur nor ony o' them, wi' her bluidy neck. I wuss she mayna tak to her wings again, and owre the knowe. But ca' in that great toozy ootlandish dowg, sir, for he's devourin' them—see hoo he's flingin' them, first ane and then anither, outowre his shoother, and keppin' them afore they touch the grun in his mooth, like a mountebank wi' a shoor o' oranges !"—" Hamish, are they bagged ?"—" Ou aye."—" Then away to windward, ye sons of bitches—Heavens, how they do their work !"

Up to the time of our grand climacteric we loved a wide range—and thought nothing of describing and discussing a circle of ten miles diameter in a day, up to our hips in heather. But for these dozen or twenty years bypast, we have preferred a narrow beat, snugly seated on a shelty, and pad the hoof on the hill no more. Yonder is the kind of ground we now love—for why should an old man make a toil of a pleasure ? 'Tis one of the many small coves belonging to Glen-Etive, and

looks down from no very great elevation upon the Loch. Its bottom, and sides nearly halfway up, are green pastures, sheep-nibbled as smooth as a lawn—and a rill, dropping in diamonds from the cliffs at its upper end, betrays itself, where the water is invisible, by a line of still livelier verdure. An old dilapidated sheepfold is the only building, and seems to make the scene still more solitary. Above the green pastures are the richest beds and bosoms of heather ever bees murmured on—and above them nothing but bare cliffs. A stiff breeze is now blowing into this cove from the sea-loch; and we shall slaughter the orphan family at our leisure. 'Tis probable they have dropped—single bird after single bird—or in twos and threes—all along the first line of heather that met their flight; and if so, we shall pop them like partridges in turnips. Three points in the game! Each dog, it is manifest, stands to a different lot of feathers; and we shall slaughter them, without dismounting, *seriatim*. No, Hamish—we must dismount—give us your shoulder—that will do. The Crutch—now we are on our pins. Take a lesson. Whirr! Bang! Bag number one, Hamish. Ay, that is right, Ponto—back Basta. Ditto, ditto. Now Ponto and Basta both back Piro—right and left this time—and not one of the brood will be left to cheep of Christopher. Be ready—attend us with the other double-barrel. Whirr! Bang—bang—bang—bang! What think you of that, you son of the mist? There is a shower of feathers! They are all at sixes and sevens upon the greensward at the edge of the heather. Seven birds at

four shots! The whole family is now disposed of—father, mother, and eleven children. If such fire still be in the dry wood, what must it have been in the green? Let us lie down in the sheltered shade of the mossy walls of the sheepfold—take a drop of Glenlivet—and philosophize.

Hollo! Hamish, who are these strange, suspicious-looking strangers thitherwards-bound, as hallan-shaker a set as may be seen on an August day? Ay, ay, we ken the clan. A week's residence to a man of gumption gives an insight into a neighbourhood. Unerring physiognomists and phrenologists are we, and what with instinctive, and what with intuitive knowledge, we keek in a moment through all disguise. He in the centre of the group is the stickit minister—on his right stands the drunken dominie—on his left the captain, who in that raised look retains token of *delirium tremens*—the land-louper behind him is the land-measurer, who would be well to do in the world were he "monarch of all he surveyed,"—but has been long out at elbows, and his society not much courted since he was rude to the auld wife at the time the gudeman was at the peats. That fine tall youth, the widow's son in Gleno, and his friend the Sketcher, with his portfolio under his arm, are in indifferent company, Hamish; but who, pray, may be the phenomenon in plush, with bow and arrow, and tasseled horn, bonnet jauntily screwed to the sinister, glass stuck in socket, and precisely in the middle of his puckered mouth a cigar. You do not say so—a grocer's apprentice from the Gorbals!

No need of confabulating there, gemmen, on the knowe—come forward and confront Christopher North. We find we have been too severe in our strictures. After all, they are not a bad set of fellows, as the world goes—imprudence must not be too harshly condemned—Shakspeare taught us to see the soul of good in things evil—these two are excellent lads; and, as for impertinence, it often proceeds from *mauvais honte*, and with a glance we shall replace the archer behind his counter.

How goes it, Cappy? Rather stiff in the back, minister, with the mouth of the fowlingpiece peeping out between the tails of your long coat, and the butt at the back of your head, by way of bolster? You will find it more comfortable to have her in hand. That bamboo, dominie, is well known to be an air-gun. Have you your horse-pistol with you to-day, surveyor? Sagittarius, think you, you could hit, at twoscore, a haystack flying? Sit down, gentlemen, and let's have a crack.

So ho! so ho! so ho! We see her black eyes beneath a primrose tuft on the brae. In spring all one bank of blossoms; but 'tis barish now and sheep-nibbled, though few eyes but our own could have thus detected there the brown back of Mawkin. Dominie, your Bamboo. Shoot her sitting? Fie fie—no, no. Kick her up, Hamish. There she goes. We are out of practice at single ball—but whizz! she has it between the shoulders. Head over heels she has started another—why, that's funny—give us your bow and arrow you green grocer—twang! within an inch of her fud. Gentlemen, suppose we tip you a song. Join all in the chorus.

THE POWCHER'S SONG.

When I was boon apprentice
In vamous Zoomerzet Shere,
Lauks ! I zerved my meester truly
Vor neerly zeven yeer,
*U*ntil I took to *Pow*ching,
Az you zhall quickly heer.
CHO. Ou ! 'twas ma delyght in a shiny night,
In the zeazon of the year:
Ou ! 'twas ma delyght in a shiny night,
In the zeazon of the year.

Az me and ma coomerades
Were zetting on a snere,
Lauks ! the Geamkeepoors caem oop to uz;
Vor them we did na kere,
'Case we could fight or wrestle, lads,
Jump over ony wheere.
CHO. Ou ! 'twas ma delyght in a shiny night,
In the zeazon of the year:
Ou ! 'twas ma delyght in a shiny night,
In the zeazon of the year.

Az we went oot wan morning
Atwixt your vive and zeex,
We cautcht a heere alive, ma lads,
We found un in a deetch ;
We popt un in a bag, ma lads,
We yoiten off vor town,
We took un to a neeghboor's hoose,
And we zold un vor a crown.
We zold un vor a crown, ma lads,
But a wont tell ye wheere.
CHO. Ou ! 'twas ma delyght in a shiny night,
In the zeazon of the year :
Ou ! 'twas ma delyght in a shiny night,
In the zeazon of the year.

Then here's success to Powching,
Vor A doos think it feere,
And here's look to ere a gentleman
Az wants to buy a heere,

And here's to ere a geamkeepoor,
Az woona zell it deere.
CHO. Ou! 'twas ma delyght in a shiny night,
In the zeazon of the year:
Ou! 'twas ma delyght in a shiny night,
In the zeazon of the year.

The Presbytery might have overlooked your fault, Mac, for the case was not a flagrant one, and you were willing, we understand, to make her an honest woman. Do you think you could recollect one of your sermons? In action and in unction you had not your superior in the Synod. Do give us a screed about Nimrod or Nebuchadnezzar. No desecration in a sermon—better omitted, we grant, prayer and psalm. Should you be unable to reproduce an entire discourse, yet by dove-tailing—that is, a bit from one and a bit from another—surely you can be at no loss for half an hour's miscellaneous matter—heads and tails. Or suppose we let you off with a View of the Church Question. You look glum and shake your head. Can you, Mac, how can you resist that Pulpit?

Behold in that semicircular low-browed cliff, backed by a range of bonny green braes dipping down from the hills that do themselves come shelving from the mountains, what appears at first sight to be a cave, but is merely a blind window, as it were, a few feet deep, arched and faced like a beautiful work of masonry, though chisel never touched it, nor man's hand dropped the line along the living stone thus wrought by nature's self, who often shows us, in her mysterious processes, resemblances of effects produced by us her

children on the same materials by our more most elaborate art. It is a very pulpit, and that projecting slab is the sounding-board. That upright stone in front of it, without the aid of fancy, may well be thought the desk. To us sitting here, this spot of greensward is the floor; the sky that hangs low, as if it loved it, the roof of the sanctuary; nor is there any harm in saying, that we, if we choose to think so, are sitting in a kirk.

Shall we mount the pulpit by that natural flight of steps, and, like a Sedgwick or a Buckland, with a specimen in one hand, and before our eyes mountains whose faces the scars of thunder have intrenched, tell you how the globe, after formation on formation, became fit residence for new-created man, and habitable no more to flying dragons? Or shall we, rather, taking the globe as we find it, speculate on the changes wrought on its surface by us, whom God gave feet to tread the earth, and faces to behold the heavens, and souls to soar into the heaven of heavens, on the wings of hope, aspiring through temporal shades to eternal light?

Brethren!—The primary physical wants of the human being are food, clothing, shelter, and defence. To supply these he has invented all his arts. Hunger and Thirst cultivate the earth. Fear builds castles and embattles cities. The animal is clothed by nature against cold and storm, and shelters himself in his den. Man builds his habitation, and weaves his clothing. With horns, or teeth, or claws, the strong and deadly weapons with which nature has furnished them, the animal kinds wage their war; he forges swords and spears, and constructs implements of

destruction that will send death almost as far as his eye can mark his foe, and sweep down thousands together. The animal that goes in quest of his food, that pursues or flies from his enemy, has feet, or wings, or fins; but man bids the horse, the camel, the elephant, bear him, and yokes them to his chariot. If the strong animal would cross the river, he swims. Man spans it with a bridge. But the most powerful of them all stands on the beach and gazes on the ocean. Man constructs a ship, and encircles the globe. Other creatures must traverse the element nature has assigned, with means she has furnished. He chooses his element, and makes his means. Can the fish traverse the waters? So can he. Can the bird fly the air? So can he. Can the camel speed over the desert? He shall bear man as his rider.

"That's beautifu'!" "Tuts, haud your tongue, and tak a chow. There's some shag." "Is he gaun to be lang, Hamish?" "Wheesht! you micht as weel be speaking in the kirk."

But to see what he owes to inventive art, we should compare man, not with inferior creatures, but with himself, looking over the face of human society, as history or observation shows it. We shall find him almost sharing the life of brutes, or removed from them by innumerable differences, and incalculable degrees. In one place we see him harbouring in caves, naked, living, we might almost say, on prey, seeking from chance his wretched sustenance, food which he eats just as he finds it. He lives like a beggar on the alms of nature. Turn to another land, and you see the face of the earth covered with

the works of his hand—his habitation, wide-spreading stately cities—his clothing and the ornaments of his person culled and fashioned from the three kingdoms of nature. For his food the face of the earth bears him tribute; and the seasons and changes of heaven concur with his own art in ministering to his board. This is the difference which man has made in his own condition by the use of his intellectual powers, awakened and goaded on by the necessities of his physical constitution.

The various knowledge, the endlessly multiplied observation, the experience and reasonings of man added to man, of generation following generation, which were required to bring to a moderate state of advancement the great primary arts subservient to physical life—the arts of providing food, habitation, clothing, and defence, *we* are utterly unable to conceive. We are *born* to the knowledge, which was collected by the labours of many ages. How slowly were those arts reared up which still remain to us! How many which had laboriously been brought to perfection, have been displaced by superior invention, and fallen into oblivion! Fenced in as we are by the works of our predecessors, we see but a small part of the power of man contending with the difficulties of his lot. But what a wonderful scene would be opened before our eyes, with what intense interest should we look on, if we could indeed behold him armed only with his own implanted powers, and going forth to conquer the creation! If we could see him beginning by subduing evils, and supplying painful wants—going

on to turn those evils and wants into the means of enjoyment—and at length, in the wantonness and pride of his power, filling his existence with luxuries;—if we could see him from his first step, in the untamed though fruitful wilderness, advancing to subdue the soil, to tame and multiply the herds—from bending the branches into a bower, to fell the forest and quarry the rock—seizing into his own hands the element of fire, directing its action on substances got from the bowels of the earth—fashioning wood, and stone, and metal, to the will of his thought—searching the nature of plants to spin their fibres, or with their virtues to heal his diseases;—if we could see him raise his first cities, launch his first ship, calling the winds and waters to be his servants, and to do his work—changing the face of the earth—forming lakes and rivers—joining seas, or stretching the continent itself into the dominion of the sea;—if we could do all this in imagination, then should we understand something of what man's intellect has done for his physical life, and what the necessities of his physical life have done in forcing into action all the powers of his intelligence.

But there are still higher considerations arising from the influence of man's physical necessities on the destiny of the species. It is this subjugation of natural evil, and this created dominion of art, that prepares the earth to be the scene of his social existence. His hard conquest was not the end of his toil. He has conquered the kingdom in which he was to dwell in his state. The full unfolding of his moral powers was only pos-

sible in those states of society which are thus brought into being by his conflict with all his physical faculties against all the stubborn powers of the material universe; for out of the same conquest Wealth is created. In this progress, and by means thus brought into action, society is divided into classes. Property itself, the allotment of the earth, takes place, because it is the bosom of the earth that yields food. That great foundation of the stability of communities is thus connected with the same necessity; and in the same progress, and out of the same causes, arise the first great Laws by which society is held together in order. Thus that whole wonderful development of the Moral Nature of man, in all those various forms which fill up the history of the race, in part arises out of, and is always intimately blended with, the labours to which he has been aroused by those first great necessities of his physical nature. But had the tendency to increase his numbers been out of all proportion to the means provided by nature, and infinitely multipliable by art, for the subsistence of human beings, how could this magnificent march have moved on?

Hence we may understand on what ground the ancient nations revered so highly, and even deified the authors of the primary arts of life. They considered not the supply of the animal wants merely; but they contemplated that mighty change in the condition of mankind to which these arts have given origin. It is on this ground, that they had raised the character of human life, that Virgil assigns them their place in the dwellings of

bliss, among devoted patriots and holy priests, among those whom song or prophecy had inspired, among those benefactors of the race whose names were to live for ever, giving his own most beautiful expression to the common sentiment of mankind.

> " Hic manus ob patriam pugnando vulnera passi,
> Quique sacerdotes casti, dum vita manebat,
> Quique pii vates, et Phœbo digna locuti,
> *Inventas aut qui vitam excoluere per artes,*
> Quique sui memores alios fecere merendo;
> *Omnibus his* niveâ cinguntur tempora vittâ."

" That's Latin for the minister and the dominie." " Wheesht! Heard you ever the like o' that? Though I dinna understaun a word o't, it gars me a' grue." " Wheesht! wheesht!—we maun pit him intil Paurliment "—" Rather intil the General Assembly, to tussle wi' the wild men." " He's nae Moderate, man; and gin I'm no sair mistaen, he's a wild man himsel', and wull uphaud the Veto." " Wheesht! wheesht! wheesht!"

True, that in savage life men starve. But is that any proof that nature has cursed the race with a fatal tendency to multiply beyond the means of subsistence? None whatever. Attend for a little to this point. Of the real power of the bodily appetites for food, and the sway they may attain over the moral nature of the mind, we, who are protected by our place among the arrangements of civil society from greatly suffering under it, can indeed form no adequate conception. Let us not now speak of those dreadful enormities which, in the midst of dismal famine, are recorded to have been perpetrated by civilized men, when the whole moral soul,

with all its strongest affections and instinctive abhorrences, has sunk prostrate under the force of that animal suffering. But the power of which we speak, as attained by this animal feeling, subsists habitually among whole tribes and nations. It is that power which it acquires over the mind of the savage, who is frequently exposed to suffer its severity, and who hunts for himself the food with which he is to appease it. Compare the mind of the human being as you are accustomed to behold him, knowing the return of this sensation only as a grateful incitement to take the ready nourishment which is spread for his repast, with that of his fellow-man bearing through the lonely woods the gnawing pang that goads him to his prey. Hunger is in his heart; hunger bears along his unfatiguing feet; hunger lies in the strength of his arm; hunger watches in his eye; hunger listens in his ear; as he couches down in his covert, silently waiting the approach of his expected spoil, this is the sole thought that fills his aching breast—"I shall satisfy my hunger!" When his deadly aim has brought his victim to the ground, this is the thought that springs up as he rushes to seize it, "I have got food for my hungry soul!" What must be the usurpation of animal nature here over the whole man! It is not merely the simple pain, as if it were the forlornness of a human creature bearing about his famishing existence in helplessness and despair—though that, too, is indeed a true picture of some states of our race; but here is not a suffering and sinking wretch—he is a strong hunter, and puts forth his strength fiercely under the urgency of this passion.

All his might in the chase, all pride of speed, and strength, and skill—all thoughts of long and hard endurance—all images of perils past—all remembrances and all foresight—are gathered on that one strong and keen desire—are bound down to the sense of that one bitter animal want. These feelings recurring day by day in the sole toil of his life, bring upon his soul a vehemence and power of desire in this object, of which we can have no conception, till he becomes subjected to hunger as to a mighty animal passion—a passion such as it rages in those fierce animal kinds which it drives with such ferocity on their prey. He knows hunger as the wolf knows it—he goes forth with his burning heart, like the tiger to lap blood. But turn to man in another condition to which he has been brought by the very agency of his physical on his intellectual and moral being! How far removed is he now from that daily contention with such evils as these! How much does he feel himself assured against them by belonging to the great confederacy of social life! How much is it veiled from his eyes by the many artificial circumstances in which the satisfaction of the want is involved! The work in which he labours the whole day—on which his eyes are fixed and his hands toil—is something altogether unconnected with his own wants—connected with distant wants and purposes of a thousand other men in which he has no participation. And as far as it is a work of skill, he has to fix his mind on objects and purposes so totally removed from himself, that they all tend still more to sever his thoughts from his own necessities: and

thus it is that civilization raises his moral character, when it protects almost every human being in a country from that subjection to this passion, to which even noble tribes are bound down in the wildernesses of nature.

"It's an awful thing hunger, Hamish, sure aneugh; but I wush he was dune; for that vice o' his sing-sanging is makin' me unco sleepy—and ance I fa' owre, I'm no easy waukenin'. But wha's that snorrin'?"

Yet it is the most melancholy part of all such speculation, to observe what a wide gloom is cast over them by this severe necessity, which is nevertheless the great and constant cause of the improvement of their condition. It is not suffering alone—for *that* they may be inured to bear,—but the darkness of the understanding, and the darkness of the heart, which comes on under the oppression of toil, that is miserable to see. Our fellow-men, born with the same spirit as ourselves, seem yet denied the common privileges of that spirit. They seem to bring faculties into the world that cannot be unfolded, and powers of affection and desire which not their fault but the lot of their birth will pervert and degrade. There is a humiliation laid upon our nature in the doom which seems thus to rest upon a great portion of our species, which, while it requires our most considerate compassion for those who are thus depressed, compels us to humble ourselves under the sense of our own participation in the nature from which it flows. Therefore, in estimating the worth, the virtue of our fellow men, whom Providence has placed in a lot that yields to them the means, and little more than the means, of support-

ing life in themselves and those born of them, let us never forget how intimate is the necessary union between the wants of the body and the thoughts of the soul. Let us remember, that over a great portion of humanity, the soul is in a struggle for its independence and power with the necessities of that nature in which it is enveloped. It has to support itself against sickening, or irritating, or maddening thoughts, inspired by weariness, lassitude, want, or the fear of want. It is chained down to the earth by the influence of one great and constant occupation—that of providing the means of its mortal existence. When it shows itself shook and agitated, or overcome in the struggle, what ought to be the thoughts and feelings of the wise for poor humanity! When, on the other hand, we see nature preserving itself pure, bold, and happy amidst the perpetual threatenings or assaults of those evils from which it cannot fly, and though oppressed by its own weary wants, forgetting them all in that love which ministers to the wants of others—when we see the brow wrinkled and drenched by incessant toil, the body in the power of its prime bowed down to the dust, and the whole frame in which the immortal spirit abides marked, but not dishonoured, by its slavery to fate—and when, in the midst of all this ceaseless depression and oppression, from which man must never hope to escape on earth, we see him still seeking and still finding joy, delight, and happiness in the finer affections of his spiritual being, giving to the lips of those he loves the scanty morsel earned by his own hungry and

thirsty toil, purchasing by sweat, sickness, and fever, Education and Instruction and Religion to the young creatures who delight him who is starving for their sakes, resting with gratitude on that day, whose return is ever like a fresh fountain to his exhausted and weary heart, and preserving a profound and high sense of his own immortality among all the earth-born toils and troubles that would in vain chain him down to the dust, —when we see all this, and think of all this, we feel indeed how rich may be the poorest of the poor, and learn to respect the moral being of man in its triumphs over the power of his physical nature. But we do not learn to doubt or deny the wisdom of the Creator. We do not learn from all these struggles, and all these defeats, and all these victories, and all these triumphs, that God sent us his creatures into this life to starve, because the air, the earth, and the waters have not wherewithal to feed the mouths that gape for food through all the elements! Nor do we learn that want is a crime, and poverty a sin—and that they who *would* toil, but cannot, and they who *can* toil, but have no work set before them, are intruders at Nature's table, and must be driven by those who are able to pay for their seats to famine, starvation, and death—almost denied a burial!—Finis. Amen.

Often has it been our lot, by our conversational powers to set the table on a snore. The more stirring the theme, the more soporific the sound of our silver voice. Look there, we beseech you! In a small spot of "stationary sunshine"—lie Hamish, and Surefoot, and O'Bronte,

and Ponto, and Piro, and Basta, all sound asleep! Dogs are troubled sleepers—but these four are now like the dreamless dead. Horses, too, seem often to be witch-ridden in their sleep. But at this moment Surefoot is stretched more like a stone than a shelty in the land of Nod. As for Hamish, were he to lie so braxy-like by himself on the hill, he would be awakened by the bill of the raven digging into his sockets. We are Morpheus and Orpheus in one incarnation—the very Pink of Poppy—the true spirit of Opium—of Laudanum the concentrated Essence—of the black Drop the Gnome.

Indeed, gentlemen, you have reason to be ashamed of yourselves—but where is the awkward squad? Clean gone. They have stolen a march on us, and while we have been preaching they have been poaching—sans mandate of the Marquis and Monzie. We may catch them ere close of day; and, if they have a smell of slaughter, we shall crack their sconces with our crutch. No apologies, Hamish—'tis only making the matter worse; but we expected better things of the Dogs. O'Bronte! fie! fie! sirrah. Your sire would not have fallen asleep during a speech of ours—and such a speech! —he would have sat it out without winking—at each more splendid passage testifying his delight by a yowl. Leap over the Crutch, you reprobate, and let us see thee scour. Look at him, Hamish, already beckoning to us on his hurdies from the hill-top. Let us scale those barriers—and away over the table-land between that summit and the head of Gleno. No sooner said than

done—and here we are on the level—such a level as the ship finds on the main sea, when in the storm-lull she rides up and down the green swell, before the trade-winds that cool the tropics. The surface of this main land-sea is black in the gloom, and green in the glimmer, and purple in the light, and crimson in the sunshine. O, never looks Nature so magnificent

> " As in this varying and uncertain weather,
> When gloom and glory force themselves together,
> When calm seems stormy, and tempestuous light
> At day's meridian lowers like noon of night!"

Whose are these fine lines? Hooky Walker, OUR OWN. Dogs! Down—down—down—be stonelike, O Shelty!—and Hamish, sink thou into the heather like a lizard; for if these old dim eyes of ours may be in aught believed, yonder by the birches stands a Red-Deer snuffing the east wind! Hush! hush! hush! He suspects an enemy in that airt—but death comes upon him with stealthy foot, from the west; and if Apollo and Diana —the divinities we so long have worshipped—be now propitious—his antlers shall be entangled in the heather, and his hoofs beat the heavens. Hamish, the rifle! A tinkle as of iron, and a hiss accompanying the explosion —and the King of the Wilderness, bounding up into the air with his antlers higher than ever waved chieftain's plume, falls down stone-dead where he stood; for the blue-pill has gone through his vitals, and lightning itself could hardly have withered him into more instantaneous cessation of life!

He is an enormous animal. What antlers! Roll him

over, Hamish, on his side! See, up to our breast, nearly, reaches the topmost branch. He is what the hunter of old called a "Stag of Ten." His eye has lost the flash of freedom—the tongue that browsed the brushwood is bitten through by the clenched teeth—the fleetness of his feet has felt that fatal frost—the wild heart is hushed, Hamish—tame, tame, tame; and there the Monarch of the Mountains—the King of the Cliffs—the Grand Lama of the Glens—the Sultan of the Solitudes—the Dey of the Deserts—the Royal Ranger of the Woods and Forests—yea, the very Prince of the Air and Thane of Thunder—"shorn of all his beams," lies motionless as a dead Jackass by the wayside, whose hide was not thought worth the trouble of flaying by his owners the gipsies! "To this complexion has he come at last"—he who at dawn had borrowed the wings of the wind to carry him across the cataracts!

A sudden pang shoots across our heart. What right had we to commit this murder? How, henceforth, shall we dare to hold up our head among the lovers of liberty, after having thus stolen basely from behind on him the boldest, brightest, and most beautiful of all her sons! We, who for so many years have been just able to hobble, and no more, by aid of the Crutch—who feared to let the heather-bent touch our toe, so sensitive in its gout—We, the old and impotent, all last winter bed-ridden, and even now seated like a lameter on a shelty, strapped by a patent buckle to a saddle provided with a pummel behind as well as before—such an unwieldy and weary wretch as We—"fat, and scant of breath"—and with

our hand almost perpetually pressed against our left side, when a coughing-fit of asthma brings back the stitch, seldom an absentee—to assassinate THAT RED-DEER, whose flight on earth could accompany the eagle's in heaven; and not only to assassinate him, but, in a moral vein, to liken his carcass to that of a Jackass! It will not bear further reflection; so, Hamish, out with your whinger, and carve him a dish fit for the gods—in a style worthy of Sir Tristrem, Gil Morice, Robin Hood, or Lord Ranald. No; let him lie till nightfall, when we shall be returning from Inveraw with strength sufficient to bear him to the Tent.

But hark, Hamish, to that sullen croak from the cliff! The old raven of the cove already scents death—

"Sagacious of his quarry from afar!"

But where art thou, Hamish? Ay, yonder is Hamish, wriggling on his very belly, like an adder, through the heather to windward of the croaker, whose nostrils, and eyes, and bill, are now all hungrily fascinated, and as it were already fastened into the very bowels of the beast. His days are numbered. That sly serpent, by circuitous windings insinuating his limber length through among all obstructions, has ascended unseen the drooping shoulder of the cliff, and now cautiously erects his crest within a hundred yards or more of the unsuspecting savage, still uttering at intervals his sullen croak, croak, croak! Something crumbles, and old Sooty, unfolding his huge wings, lifts himself up like Satan, about to sail away for a while into another glen; but the rifle rings among the rocks—the lead has broken his spine—and

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look! how the demon, head over heels, goes tumbling down, down, down, many hundred fathoms, dashed to pieces and impaled on the sharp-pointed granite! Ere nightfall the bloody fragments will be devoured by his mate. Nothing now will disturb the carcass of the deer. No corbies dare enter the cove where the raven reigned; the hawk prefers grouse to venison, and so does the eagle, who, however, like a good Catholic as he is—this is Friday—has gone out to sea for a fish dinner, which he devours to the music of the waves on some isle-rock. Therefore lie there, dethroned king! till thou art decapitated; and ere the moon wanes, that haunch will tower gloriously on our Tent-table at the Feast of Shells.

What is your private opinion, O'Bronte, of the taste of Red-deer blood? Has it not a wild twang on the tongue and palate, far preferable to sheep's-head? You are absolutely undergoing transfiguration into a deer-hound! With your fore-paws on the flank, your tail brandished like a standard, and your crimson flews (thank you, Shepherd, for that word) licked by a long lambent tongue red as crimson, while your eyes express a fierce delight never felt before, and a stifled growl disturbs the star on your breast—just as you stand now, O'Bronte, might Edwin Landseer rejoice to paint thy picture, for which, immortal image of the wilderness, the Duke of Bedford would not scruple to give a draft on his banker for one thousand pounds!

Shooting grouse after red-deer is, for a while at first, felt to be like writing an anagram in a lady's album,

after having given the finishing touch to a tragedy or an epic poem. 'Tis like taking to catching shrimps in the sand with one's toes, on one's return from Davis' Straits in a whaler that arrived at Peterhead with sixteen fish, each calculated at ten tun of oil. Yet, 'tis strange how the human soul can descend, pleasantly at every note, from the top to the bottom of passion's and imagination's gamut.

A Tarn—a Tarn! with but a small circle of unbroken water in the centre, and all the rest of its shallowness bristling, in every bay, with reeds and rushes, and surrounded, all about the mossy flat, with marshes and quagmires! What a breeding-place—"procreant cradle" for water fowl! Now comes thy turn, O'Bronte—for famous is thy name, almost as thy sire's, among the flappers. Crawl down to leeward, Hamish, that you may pepper them—should they take to flight overhead to the loch. Surefoot, taste that greensward, and you will find it sweet and succulent. Dogs, heel—heel!—and now let us steal, on our Crutch, behind that knoll, and open a sudden fire on the swimmers, who seem to think themselves out of shot at the edge of that line of water-lilies; but some of them will soon find themselves mistaken, whirling round on their backs, and vainly endeavouring to dive after their friends that disappear beneath the agitated surface shot-swept into spray. Long Gun! who oft to the forefinger of Colonel Hawker hast swept the night-harbour of Poole all alive with widgeons, be true to the trust now reposed in thee by Kit North! And though these be neither geese, nor swans, nor hoopers,

yet send thy leaden shower among them feeding in their play, till all the air be afloat with specks, as if at the shaking of a feather-bed that had burst the ticking, and the tarn covered with sprawling mawsies and mallards, in death-throes among the ducklings! There it lies on its rest—like a telescope. No eye has discovered the invention—keen as those wild eyes are of the plowterers on the shallows. Lightning and thunder! to which all the echoes roar. But we meanwhile are on our back; for of all the recoils that ever shook a shoulder, that one was the severest—but 'twill probably cure our rheumatism and——Well done—nobly, gloriously done, O'Bronte! Heaven and earth, how otter-like he swims! Ha, Hamish! you have cut off the retreat of that airy voyager—you have given it him in his stern, Hamish—and are reloading for the flappers. One at a time in your mouth, O'Bronte! Put about with that tail for a rudder—and make for the shore. What a stately creature! as he comes issuing from the shallows, and, bearing the old mallard breast high, walks all dripping along the greensward, and then shakes from his curled ebony the flashing spray-mist. He gives us one look as we crown the knoll, and then in again with a spang and a plunge far into the tarn, caring no more for the reeds than for so many winlestraes, and, fast as a sea-serpent, is among the heart of the killed and wounded. In unerring instinct he always seizes the dead—and now a devil's dozen lie along the shore. Come hither, O'Bronte, and caress thy old master. Ay—that showed a fine feeling—did that long shake that bedrizzled the

sunshine. Put thy paws over our shoulders, and round our neck, true son of thy sire—oh! that he were but alive, to see and share thy achievements; but indeed, two such dogs, living together in their prime at one era, would have been too great glory for this sublunary canine world. Therefore Sirius looked on thy sire with an evil eye, and in jealousy—

"Tantæne animis cælestibus iræ!"

growled upon some sinner to poison the Dog of all Dogs, who leapt up almost to the ceiling of the room where he slept—our own bed-room—under the agony of that accursed arsenic, gave one horrid howl, and expired. Methinks we know his murderer—his eye falls when it meets ours on the Street of Princes; and let him scowl there but seldom—for though 'tis but suspicion, this fist, O'Bronte, doubles at the sight of the miscreant—and some day, impelled by wrath and disgust, it will smash his nose flat with the other features, till his face is a pancake. Yea! as sure as Themis holds her balance in the skies, shall the poisoner be punished out of all recognition by his parents, and be disowned by the Irish Cockney father that begot him, and the Scotch Cockney mother that bore him, as he carries home a tripe-like countenance enough to make his paramour the scullion miscarry, as she opens the door to him on the fifth flat of a common stair. But we are getting personal, O'Bronte, a vice abhorrent from our nature.

There goes our Crutch, Hamish, whirling aloft in the sky a rainbow flight, even like the ten-pound hammer

from the fling of George Scougal at the St Ronan's games. Our gout is gone—so is our asthma—eke our rheumatism—and, like an eagle, we have renewed our youth. There is hop, step, and jump, for you, Hamish—we should not fear, young and agile as you are, buck, to give you a yard. But now for the flappers. Pointers all, stir your stumps and into the water. This is rich. Why, the reeds are as full of flappers as of frogs. If they can fly, the fools don't know it. Why, there is a whole musquitto-fleet of yellow boys, not a month old. What a prolific old lady must she have been, to have kept on breeding till July. There she sits, cowering, just on the edge of the reeds, uncertain whether to dive or fly. By the creak and cry of the cradle of thy first-born, Hamish, spare the plumage on her yearning and quaking breast. The little yellow images have all melted away, and are now, in holy cunning of instinct, deep down beneath the waters, shifting for themselves among the very mud at the bottom of the reeds. By and by, they will be floating with but the points of their bills above the surface, invisible among the air-bells. The parent duck has also disappeared; the drake you disposed of, Hamish, as the coward was lifting up his lumbering body, with fat doup and long neck in the air, to seek safer skies. We male creatures—drakes, ganders, and men alike—what are we, when affection pleads, in comparison with females! In our passions, we are brave, but these satiated, we turn upon our heel and disappear from danger, like dastards. But doves, and ducks, and women, are fearless in affection, to the very

death. Therefore have we all our days, sleeping or waking, loved the sex, virgin and matron, nor would we hurt a hair of their heads, grey or golden, for all else that shines beneath the sun.

Not the best practice this in the world, certainly, for pointers—and it may teach them bad habits on the hill; but, in some situations, all dogs and all men are alike, and cross them as you will, not a breed but shows a taint of original sin, when under a temptation sufficiently strong to bring it out. Ponto, Piro, and Basta, are now, according to their abilities, all as bad as O'Bronte—and never, to be sure, was there such a worrying in this wicked world. But now we shall cease our fire, and leave the few flappers that are left alive to their own meditations. Our conduct for the last hour must have seemed to them no less unaccountable than alarming; and something to quack over during the rest of the season. Well, we do not remember ever to have seen a prettier pile of ducks and ducklings. Hamish, take census. What do you say—two score? That beats cockfighting. Here's a hank of twine, Hamish, tie them all together by the legs, and hang them, in two divisions of equal weights, over the crupper of Surefoot.

THE MOORS.

FLIGHT THIRD—STILL LIFE.

We have been sufficiently slaughterous for a man of our fine sensibilities and moderate desires, Hamish; and as, somehow or other, the scent seems to be beginning not to lie well—yet the air cannot be said to be close and sultry either—we shall let Brown Bess cool herself in both barrels—relinquish, for an hour or so, our seat on Shelty, and, by way of a change, pad the hoof up that smooth ascent, strangely left stoneless—an avenue positively looking as if it were artificial, as it stretches away, with its beautiful green undulations, among the blocks; for though no view-hunter, we are, Hamish, what in fine language is called a devout worshipper of Nature, an enthusiast in the sublime; and if Nature do not show us something worth gazing at when we reach yonder altitudes, she must be a grey deceiver, and we shall never again kneel at her footstool, or sing a hymn in her praise.

The truth is, we have a rending headache, for Bess has been for some hours on the kick, and Surefoot on the jog, and our exertions in the pulpit were severe—action, Hamish, action, action, being, as Demosthenes said some two or three thousand years ago, essential to oratory; and you observed how nimbly we kept changing legs, Hamish, how strenuously brandishing arms, throughout our discourse—saving the cunning pauses, thou simpleton, when, by way of relief to our auditors, we were as gentle as sucking-doves, and folded up our wings as if about to go to roost, whereas we were but meditating a bolder flight—about to soar, Hamish, into the empyrean. Over and above all that, we could not brook Tickler's insolence, who, about the sma' hours, challenged us, you know, quech for quech; and though we gave him a fair back-fall, yet we suffered in the tuilzie, and there is at this moment a throbbing in our temples that threatens a regular brain-fever. We burn for an air-bath on the mountain-top. Moreover, we are seized with a sudden desire for solitude—to be plain, we are getting sulky; so ascend, Surefoot, Hamish, and be off with the pointers—O'Bronte goes with us—north-west, making a circumbendibus round the *Tomhans*, where Mhairhe M'Intyre lived seven years with the fairies; and in a couple of hours or so, you will find us under the Merlin Crag.

We offer to walk any man of our age in Great Britain. But what *is* our age? Confound us if we know within a score or two. Yet we cannot get rid of the impression that we are under ninety. However, as we seek

no advantage, and give no odds, we challenge the octogenarians of the United Kingdom—fair toe and heel—a twelve-hour match—for love, fame, and a legitimate exchequer bill for a thousand. Why, these calves of ours would look queer, we confess, on the legs of a Leith porter; but even in our prime they were none of your big vulgar calves, but they handled like iron—now more like butter. There is still a spring in our instep; and our knees, sometimes shaky, are to-day knit as Pan's and neat as Apollo's. Poet we may not be, but Pedestrian we are; with Wordsworth we could not walk along imaginative heights, but, if not grievously out of our reckoning, on the turnpike road we could keep pace with Captain Barclay for a short distance—say from Dundee to Aberdeen.

Oh! Gemini! but we are in high spirits. Yes—delights there indeed are, which none but pedestrians know. Much—all depends on the character of the wanderer; he must have known what it is to commune with his own thoughts and feelings, and be satisfied with them even as with the converse of a chosen friend. Not that he must always, in the solitudes that await him, be in a meditative mood, for ideas and emotions will of themselves arise, and he will only have to enjoy the pleasures which his own being spontaneously affords. It would indeed be a hopeless thing, if we were always to be on the stretch for happiness. Intellect, Imagination, and Feeling, all work of their own free-will, and not at the order of any taskmaster. A rill soon becomes a stream—a stream a river—a river a loch

—and a loch a sea. So it is with the current within the spirit. It carries us along, without either oar or sail, increasing in depth, breadth, and swiftness, yet all the while the easy work of our own wonderful minds. While we seem only to see or hear, we are thinking and feeling far beyond the mere notices given by the senses; and years afterwards we find that we have been laying up treasures, in our most heedless moments, of imagery, and connecting together trains of thought that arise in startling beauty, almost without cause or any traceable origin. The Pedestrian, too, must not only love his own society, but the society of any other human beings, if blameless and not impure, among whom his lot may for a short season be cast. He must rejoice in all the forms and shows of life, however simple they may be, however humble, however low; and be able to find food for his thoughts beside the ingle of the loneliest hut, where the inmates sit with few words, and will rather be spoken to than speak to the stranger. In such places he will be delighted—perhaps surprised—to find in uncorrupted strength all the primary elements of human character. He will find that his knowledge may be wider that theirs, and better ordered, but that it rests on the same foundation, and comprehends the same matter. There will be no want of sympathies between him and them; and what he knows best, and loves most, will seldom fail to be that also which they listen to with greatest interest, and respecting which there is the closest communion between the minds of stranger and host. He may know the courses of the stars according to the revelation of science

—they may have studied them only as simple shepherds, "whose hearts were gladdened" walking on the mountain-top. But they know—as he does—who sowed the stars in heaven, and that their silent courses are all adjusted by the hand of the Most High.

Oh! blessed, thrice blessed years of youth! would we choose to live over again all your forgotten and unforgotten nights and days! Blessed, thrice blessed we call you, although, as we then felt, often darkened almost into insanity by self-sown sorrows springing out of our restless soul. No, we would not again face such troubles, not even for the glorious apparitions that familiarly haunted us in glens and forests, on mountains and on the great sea. But all, or nearly all that did once so grievously disturb, we can lay in the depths of the past, so that scarcely a ghastly voice is heard, a ghastly face beheld; while all that so charmed of yore, or nearly all, although no longer the daily companions of our life, still survive to be recalled at solemn hours, and with a "beauty still more beauteous" to reinvest the earth, which neither sin nor sorrow can rob of its enchantments. We can still travel with the solitary mountain-stream from its source to the sea, and see new visions at every vista of its winding waters. The waterfall flows not with its own monotonous voice of a day or an hour, but like a choral anthem pealing with the hymns of many years. In the heart of the blind mist on the mountain-ranges we can now sit alone, surrounded by a world of images, over which time holds no power but to consecrate or solemnize. Solitude we can deepen by a single volition, and by a single

volition let in upon it the stir and noise of the world and life. Why, therefore, should we complain, or why lament the inevitable loss or change that time brings with it to all that breathe? Beneath the shadow of the tree we can yet repose, and tranquillize our spirit by its rustle, or by the "green light" unchequered by one stirring leaf. From sunrise to sunset, we can lie below the old mossy tower, till the darkness that shuts out the day, hides not the visions that glide round the ruined battlements. Cheerful as in a city can we traverse the houseless moor; and although not a ship be on the sea, we can set sail on the wings of imagination, and when wearied, sink down on savage or serene isle, and let drop our anchor below the moon and stars.

And 'tis well we are so spiritual; for the senses are of no use here, and we must draw for amusement on our internal sources. A day-like night we have often seen about midsummer, serenest of all among the Hebrides; but a night-like day, such as this, ne'er before fell on us, and we might as well be in the Heart o' Mid-Lothian. 'Tis a dungeon, and a dark one—and we know not for what crime we have been condemned to solitary confinement. Were it mere mist we should not mind; but the gloom is palpable—and makes resistance to the hand. We did not think clouds capable of such condensation—the blackness may be felt like velvet on a hearse. Would that something would rustle—but no—all is breathlessly still, and not a wind dares whistle. If there be any thing visible or audible hereabout, then are we stone-blind and stone-deaf. We have a vision!

See! a great City in a mist! All is not shrouded—at intervals something huge is beheld in the sky—what we know not, tower, temple, spire, dome, or a pile of nameless structures—one after the other fading away, or sinking and settling down into the gloom that grows deeper and deeper like a night. The stream of life seems almost hushed in the blind blank—yet you hear ever and anon, now here, now there, the slow sound of feet moving to their own dull echoes, and lo! the Sun

> "Looks through the horizontal misty air,
> Shorn of his beams,"

like some great ghost. Ay, he *looks!* does he not? straight on *your* face, as if you two were the only beings there—and were held *looking* at each other in some strange communion. Surely you must sometimes have felt that emotion, when the Luminary seemed no longer luminous, but a dull-red brazen orb, sick unto the death—obscure the Shedder of Light and the Giver of Life lifeless!

The Sea has sent a tide-borne wind to the City, and you almost start in wonder to behold all the heavens clear of clouds, (how beautiful was the clearing!) and bending in a mighty blue bow, that brightly overarches all the brightened habitations of men! The spires shoot up into the sky—the domes tranquilly rest there—all the roofs glitter as with diamonds, all the white walls are lustrous, save where, here and there, some loftier range of buildings hangs its steadfast shadow o'er square or street, magnifying the city, by means of separate multitudes of structures, each town-like in itself, and

the whole gathered together by the outward eye, and the inward imagination, worthy indeed of the name of Metropolis.

Let us sit down on this bench below the shadow of the Parthenon. The air is now so rarefied, that you can see not indistinctly the figure of a man on Arthur's Seat. The Calton, though a city hill—is as green as the Carter towering over the Border-forest. Not many years ago, no stone edifice was on his unviolated verdure—he was a true rural Mount, where the lassies bleached their claes, in a pure atmosphere, aloof from the city smoke almost as the sides and summit of Arthur's Seat. Flocks of sheep might have grazed here, had there been enclosures, and many milch cows. But in their absence a pastoral character was given to the Hill by its green silence, here and there broken by the songs and laughter of those linen-bleaching lassies, and by the arm-in-arm strolling of lovers in the morning light or the evening shade. Here married people use to walk with their children, thinking and feeling themselves to be in the country; and here elderly gentlemen, like ourselves, with gold-headed canes, or simple crutches, mused and meditated on the ongoings of the noisy lower world. Such a Hill, so close to a great City, yet undisturbed by it, and embued at all times with a feeling of sweeter peace, because of the immediate neighbourhood of the din and stir of which its green recess high up in the blue air never partook, seems now, in the mingled dream of imagination and memory, to have been a super-urban Paradise! But a city cannot, ought not to be, con-

trolled in its growth; the natural beauty of this hill has had its day; now it is broken all round with wide walks, along which you might drive chariots a-breast; broad flights of stone-stairs lead up along the once elastic brae-turf; and its bosom is laden with towers and temples, monuments and mausoleums. Along one side, where hanging gardens might have been, magnificent as those of the old Babylon, stretches the macadamized Royal Road to London, flanked by one receptacle for the quiet dead, and by another for the unquiet living—a churchyard and a prison dying away in a bridewell. But, making amends for such hideous deformities, with front nobly looking to the cliffs, over a dell of dwellings seen dimly through the smoke-mist, stands, sacred to the Muses, an Edifice that might have pleased the eye of Pericles! Alas, immediately below, one that would have turned the brain of Palladio! Modern Athens indeed! Few are the Grecians among thy architects; those who are not Goths are Picts—and the King himself of the Painted People designed Nelson's Monument.

But who can be querulous on such a day? Weigh all its defects, designed and undesigned, and is not Edinburgh yet a noble city? Arthur's Seat! how like a lion! The magnificent range of Salisbury Crags, on which a battery might be built to blow the whole inhabitation to atoms! Our friend here, the Calton, with his mural crown! Our Castle on his Cliff! Gloriously hung round with national histories along all his battlements! Do they not embosom him in a style of gran-

deur worthy, if such it be, of a "City of Palaces?" Call all things by their right names, in heaven and on earth. Palaces they are not—nor are they built of marble; but they are stately houses, framed of stone from Craig-Leith quarry, almost as pale as the Parian; and when the sun looks fitfully through the storm, or as now, serenely through the calm, richer than Parian in the tempestuous or the peaceful light. Never beheld we the city wearing such a majestic metropolitan aspect.

> "Ay, proudly fling thy white arms to the sea,
> Queen of the unconquer'd North!"

How near the Frith! Gloriously does it supply the want of a river. It is a river, though seeming, and sweeping into, the sea; but a river that man may never bridge; and though still now as the sky, we wish you saw it in its magnificent madness, when brought on the roarings of the stormful tide

> "Breaks the long wave that at the Pole began."

Coast-cities alone are Queens. All inland are but Tributaries. Earth's empiry belongs to the Power that sees its shadow in the sea. Two separate Cities, not twins—but one of ancient and one of modern birth—how harmoniously in spite of form and features characteristically different, do they coalesce into one Capital! This miracle, methinks, is wrought by the Spirit of Nature on the World of Art. Her great features subdue almost into similarity a Whole constructed of such various elements, for it is all felt to be kindred with those guardian cliffs. Those eternal heights hold the

Double City together in an amity that breathes over both the same national look—the impression of the same national soul. In the olden time, the city gathered herself almost under the very wing of the Castle; for in her heroic heart she ever heard, unalarmed but wat chful, the alarums of war, and that cliff, under heaven, was on earth the rock of her salvation. But now the foundation of that rock, whence yet the tranquil burgher hears the morning and the evening bugle, is beautified by gardens that love its pensive shadow, for it tames the light to flowers by rude feet untrodden, and yielding garlands for the brows of perpetual peace. Thence elegance and grace arose; and while antiquity breathes over that wilderness of antique structures picturesquely huddled along the blue line of sky—as Wilkie once finely said, like the spine of some enormous animal; yet all along this side of that unrivered and mound-divided dell, now shines a new world of radiant dwellings, declaring by their regular but not monotonous magnificence, that the same people, whose "perfervid genius" preserved them by war unhumbled among the nations in days of darkness, have now drawn a strength as invincible, from the beautiful arts which have been cultivated by peace in the days of light.

And is the spirit of the inhabitation there worthy of the place inhabited? We are a Scotsman. And the great English Moralist has asked, where may a Scotsman be found who loves not the honour or the glory of his country better than truth? We are that Scotsman —though for our country would we die. Yet dearer

too than life is to us the honour—if not the glory of our country; and had we a thousand lives, proudly would we lay them all down in the dust rather than give—or see given—one single stain

> "Unto the silver cross, to Scotland dear,"

on which as yet no stain appears save those glorious weather-stains, that have fallen on its folds from the clouds of war and the storms of battle. Sufficient praise to the spirit of our land, that she knows how to love, admire, and rival—not in vain—the spirit of high-hearted and heroic England. Long as we and that other noble Isle

> "Set as an emerald in the casing sea,"

in triple union breathe as one,

> "Then come against us the whole world in arms,
> And we will meet them!"

What is a people without pride? But let them know that its root rests on noble pillars; and in the whole range of strength and stateliness, what pillars are there stronger and statelier than those glorious two—Genius and Liberty? Here valour has fought—here philosophy has meditated—here poetry has sung. Are not our living yet as brave as our dead? All wisdom has not perished with the sages to whom we have built or are building monumental tombs. The muses yet love to breathe the pure mountain-air of Caledon. And have we not amongst us one myriad-minded man, whose name, without offence to that highpriest of nature, or

his devoutest worshippers, may flow from our lips even when they utter that of SHAKSPEARE?

The Queen of the North has evaporated—and we again have a glimpse of the Highlands. But where's the Sun? We know not in what airt to look for him, for who knows but it may now be afternoon? It is almost dark enough for evening—and if it be not far on in the day, then we shall have thunder. What saith our repeater? One o'clock. Usually the brightest hour of all the twelve—but any thing but bright at this moment. Can there be an eclipse going on—an earthquake at his toilette—or merely a brewing of storm? Let us consult our almanac. No eclipse set down for to-day—the old earthquake dwells in the neighbourhood of Comrie, and has never been known to journey thus far north—besides he has for some years been bed-ridden; argal, there is about to be a storm. What a fool of a land-tortoise were we to crawl up to the top of a mountain, when we might have taken our choice of half-a-dozen glens with cottages in them every other mile, and a village at the end of each with a comfortable Change-house! And up which of its sides, pray, was it that we crawled? Not this one—for it is as steep as a church—and we never in our life peeped over the brink of an uglier abyss. Ay, Mister Merlin, 'tis wise of you to be flying home into your crevice—put your head below your wing, and do cease that cry.—Croak! croak! croak! Where is the sooty sinner? We hear he is on the wing—but he either sees or smells us, probably both, and the horrid gurgle in his throat is choked by

some cloud. Surely that was the sughing of wings! A Bird! alighting within fifty yards of us—and, from his mode of folding his wings—an Eagle! This is too much—within fifty yards of an Eagle on his own mountain-top. Is he blind? Age darkens even an Eagle's eyes—but he is not old, for his plumage is perfect—and we see the glare of his far-keekers as he turns his head over his shoulder and regards his eyry on the cliff. We would not shoot him for a thousand a-year for life. Not old—how do we know that? Because he is a creature who is young at a hundred—so says Audubon—Swainson—our brother James—and all shepherds. Little suspects he who is lying so near him with his Crutch. Our snuffy suit is of a colour with the storm-stained granite—and if he walk this way he will get a buffet. And he *is* walking this way—his head up, and his tail down—not hopping like a filthy raven—but one foot before the other—like a man—like a King. We do not altogether like it—it is rather alarming—he may not be an Eagle after all—but something worse—"Hurra! ye Sky-scraper! Christopher is upon you! take that, and that, and that"—all one tumbling scream, there he goes, Crutch and all, over the edge of the cliff. Dashed to death—but impossible for us to get the body. Whew! dashed to death indeed! There he wheels, all on fire, round the thunder-gloom. Is it electric matter in the atmosphere—or fear and wrath that illumine his wings?

We wish we were safe down. There is no wind here yet—none to speak of; but there is wind enough, to all appearance, in the region towards the west. The main

body of the clouds is falling back on the reserve—and observing that movement the right wing deploys—as for the left it is broken, and its retreat will soon be a flight. Fear is contagious—the whole army has fallen into irremediable disorder—has abandoned its commanding position—and in an hour will be self-driven into the sea. We call that a Panic.

Glory be to the corps that covers the retreat. We see now the cause of that retrograde movement. In the north-west, "far off its coming shone," and "in numbers without number numberless," lo! the adverse Host! Thrown out in front the beautiful rifle brigade comes fleetly on, extending in open order along the vast plain between the aerial Pine-mountains to yon Fire-cliffs. The enemy marches in masses—the space between the divisions now widening and now narrowing—and as sure as we are alive we hear the sound of trumpets. The routed army has rallied and re-appears—and, hark, on the extreme left a cannonade. Never before had the Unholy Alliance a finer park of artillery—and now its fire opens from the great battery in the centre, and the hurly-burly is general far and wide over the whole field of battle.

But these lead drops dancing on our bonnet tell us to take up our crutch and be off—for there it is sticking—by and by the waters will be in flood, and we may have to pass a night on the mountain. Down we go.

We do not call this the same side of the mountain we crawled up? There, all was purple except what was green—and we were happy to be a heather-legged body,

occasionally skipping like a grashopper on turf. Here, all rocks save stones. Get out of the way, ye ptarmigans. We hate shingle from the bottom of our —— oh dear! oh dear! but *this* is painful—sliddering on shingle away down what is any thing but an inclined plane—feet foremost—accompanied with rattling debris—at railroad speed—every twenty yards or so dislodging a stone as big as one's-self, who instantly joins the procession, and there they go hopping and jumping along with us; some before, some at each side, and, we shudder to think of it, some behind—well somersetted over our head, thou Grey Wackè—but mercy on us, and forgive us our sins, for if this lasts, in another minute we are all at the bottom of that pond of pitch. Take care of yourself, O'Bronte!

Here we are—sitting! How we were brought to assume this rather uneasy posture we do not pretend to say. We confine ourselves to the fact. Sitting beside a Tarn. Our escape appears to have been little less than miraculous, and must have been mainly owing, under Providence, to the Crutch. Who's laughing? 'Tis you, you old Witch, in hood and cloak, crouching on the cliff, as if you were warming your hands at the fire. Hold your tongue—and you may sit there to all eternity if you choose—you cloud-ridden hag! No—there will be a blow-up some day—as there evidently has been here before now; but no more Geology—from the tarn, who is a 'tarnation deep 'un, runs a rill, and he offers to be our guide down to the Low Country.

Why, this does not look like the same day. No gloom here—but a green serenity—not so poetical perhaps, but,

in a human light, far preferable to a "brown horror." No sulphureous smell—"the air is balm." No sultriness—how cool the circulating medium! In our youth, when we had wings on our feet—and were a feathered Mercury—Cherub we never were nor Cauliflower—by flying, in our weather-wisdom, from glen to glen, we have made one day a whole week—with, at the end, a Sabbath. For all over the really moun*taineous* region of the Highlands, every glen has its own indescribable kind of day—all vaguely comprehended under the One Day that may happen to be uppermost; and Lowland meteorologists, meeting in the evening after a long absence—having, perhaps, parted that morning—on comparing notes lose their temper, and have been even known to proceed to extremities in defence of facts well-established of a most contradictory and irreconcilable nature.

Here is an angler fishing with the fly. In the glen beyond that range he would have used the minnow—and in the huge hollow behind our friends to the South-east, he might just as well try the bare hook—though it is not universally true that trouts don't rise when there is thunder. Let us see how he throws. What a cable! Flies! Tufts of heather. Hollo, you there; friend, what sport? What sport we say? No answer; are you deaf? Dumb? He flourishes his flail and is mute. Let us try what a whack on the back may elicit. Down he flings it, and staring on us with a pair of most extraordinary eyes, and a beard like a goat, is off like a shot. Alas! we have frightened the wretch out of his few poor wits, and he may kill himself among the rocks. He is indeed

an idiot—an innocent. We remember seeing him near this very spot forty years ago—and he was not young then—they often live to extreme old age. No wonder he was terrified—for we are duly sensible of the *outre tout ensemble* we must have suddenly exhibited in the glimmer that visits those weak red eyes—he is an albino. That whack was rash, to say the least of it—our Crutch was too much for him; but we hear him whining—and moaning—and, good God! there he is on his knees with hands claspt in supplication—"Dinna kill me—dinna kill me—'am silly—'am silly—and folk say 'am auld—auld—auld." The harmless creature is convinced we are not going to kill him—takes from our hand what he calls his fishing-rod and tackle—and laughs like an owl. "Ony meat—ony meat—ony meat?" "Yes, innocent, there is some meat in this wallet, and you and we shall have our dinner." "Ho! ho! ho! ho! a smelled, a smelled! a can say the Lord's Prayer." "What's your name, my man?" "Daft Dooggy the Haveril." "Sit down, Dugald." A sad mystery all this—a drop of water on the brain will do it—so wise physicians say, and we believe it. For all that, the brain is not the soul. He takes the food with a kind of howl—and carries it away to some distance, muttering "a aye eats by mysel'!" He is saying grace! And now he is eating like an animal. 'Tis a saying of old, "Their lives are hidden with God!"

This lovely little glen is almost altogether new to us: yet so congenial its quiet to the longings of our heart, that all at once it is familiar to us as if we had sojourned

here for days—as if that cottage were our dwelling-place —and we had retired hither to await the close. Were we never here before—in the olden and golden time? Those dips in the summits of the mountain seem to recall from oblivion memories of a morning all the same as this, enjoyed by us with a different joy, almost as if then we were a different being, joy then the very element in which we drew our breath, satisfied now to live in the atmosphere of sadness often thickened with grief. 'Tis thus that there grows a confusion among the past times in the dormitory—call it not the burial-place—overshadowed by sweet or solemn imagery—in the inland regions; nor can we question the recollections as they rise—being ghosts, they are silent—their coming and their going alike a mystery—but sometimes—as now—they are happy hauntings—and age is almost gladdened into illusion of returning youth.

'Tis a lovely little glen as in all the Highlands—yet we know not that a painter would see in it the subject of a picture—for the sprinklings of young trees have been sown capriciously by nature, and there seems no reason why on that hillside, and not on any other, should survive the remains of an old wood. Among the multitude of knolls a few are eminent with rocks and shrubs, but there is no central assemblage, and the green wilderness wantons in such disorder that you might believe the pools there to be, not belonging as they are to the same running water, but each itself a small separate lakelet fed by its own spring. True, that above its homehills there are mountains—and these are cliffs on which the

eagle might not disdain to build—but the range wheels away in its grandeur to face a loftier region, of which we see here but the summits swimming in the distant clouds.

God bless that hut! and have its inmates in his holy keeping! But what Fairy is this coming unawares on us sitting by the side of the most lucid of little wells? Set down thy pitcher, my child, and let us have a look at thy happiness—for though thou mayst wonder at our words, and think us a strange old man, coming and going, once and for ever, to thee and thine a shadow and no more, yet lean thy head towards us that we may lay our hands on it and bless it—and promise, as thou art growing up here, sometimes to think of the voice that spake to thee by the Birk-tree well. Love, fear, and serve God, as the Bible teaches—and whatever happens thee, quake not, but put thy trust in Heaven.

Do not be afraid of him, sweet one! O'Bronte would submit to be flayed alive rather than bite a child—see, he offers you a paw—take it without trembling—nay, he will let thee ride on his back, my pretty dear—won't thou, O'Bronte? and scamper with thee up and down the knolls like her coal-black charger rejoicing to bear the Fairy Queen. Thou tellest us thy father and mother, sisters and brothers, all are dead; yet with a voice cheerful as well as plaintive. Smile—laugh—sing—as thou wert doing a minute ago—as thou hast done for many a morning—and shall do for many a morning more on thy way to the well—in the woods—on the braes—in the house—often all by thyself when

the old people are out of doors not far off—or when sometimes they have for a whole day been from home out of the glen. Forget not our words—and no evil can befall thee that may not, weak as thou art, be borne—and nothing wicked that is allowed to walk the earth will ever be able to hurt a hair on thy head.

My stars! what a lovely little animal! A tame fawn, by all that is wild—kneeling down—to drink—no—no—at his lady's feet. The colley catched it—thou sayest—on the edge of the Auld wood—and by the time its wounds were cured, it seemed to have forgot its mother, and soon learnt to follow thee about to far-off places quite out of sight of this—and to play gamesome tricks like a creature born among human dwellings. What! it dances like a kid—does it—and sometimes you put a garland of wild-flowers round its neck—and pursue it like a huntress, as it pretends to be making its escape into the forest?

Look, child, here is a pretty green purse for you, that opens and shuts with a spring—so—and in it there is a gold coin, called a sovereign, and a crooked sixpence. Don't blush—that was a graceful curtsy. Keep the crooked sixpence for good-luck, and you never will want. With the yellow fellow buy a Sunday gown and a pair of Sunday shoes, and what else you like; and now—you two, lead the way—try a race to the door—and old Christopher North will carry the pitcher—balancing it on his head—thus—ha! O'Bronte galloping along as umpire. The Fawn has it, and by a neck has beat Camilla.

We shall lunch ere we go—and lunch well too—for

this is a poor man's, not a pauper's hut, and Heaven still grants his prayer—" give us this day our daily bread." Sweeter—richer bannocks of barley-meal never met the mouth of mortal man—nor more delicious butter. " We salt it, sir, for a friend in Glasgow—but now and then we tak' a bite of the fresh—do oblige us a', sir, by eatin', and you'll maybe find the mutton-ham no that bad, though I've kent it fatter—and, as you ha'e a long walk afore you, excuse me, sir, for being sae bauld as to suggeest a glass o' speerit in your milk. The gudeman is temperate, and he's been sae a' his life—but we keep it for a cordial—and that bottle—to be sure it's a gay big ane—and would thole replenishing—has lasted us syne Whitsuntide."

So presseth us to take care of number one the gudewife, while the gudeman, busy as ourselves, eyes her with a well-pleased face, but saith nothing, and the bonnie we bit lassie sits on her stool at the wunnoc wi' her coggie ready to do any service at a look, and supping little or nothing, out of bashfulness in presence of Christopher North, who she believes is a good, and thinks may, perhaps, be some great man. Our third bannock has had the gooseberry jam laid on it thick by " the gudewife's ain haun',"—and we suspect at that last wide bite we have smeared the corners of our mouth—but it will only be making matters worse to attempt licking it off with our tongue. Pussie ! thou hast a cunning look—purring on our knees—and though those glass een o' thine are blinking at the cream on the saucer—with which thou

jalousest we intend to let thee wet thy whiskers,—we fear thou mak'st no bones of the poor birdies in the brake, and that many an unlucky leveret has lost its wits at the spring of such a tiger. Cats are queer creatures, and have an instinctive liking to Warlocks.

And these two old people have survived all their children—sons and daughters! They have told us the story of their life—and as calmly as if they had been telling of the trials of some other pair. Perhaps, in our sympathy, though we say but little, they feel a strength that is not always theirs—perhaps it is a relief from silent sorrow to speak to one who is a stranger to them, and yet, as they may think, a brother in affliction—but prayer like thanksgiving assures us that there is in this hut a Christian composure, far beyond the need of our pity, and sent from a region above the stars.

There cannot be a cleaner cottage. Tidiness, it is pleasant to know, has for a good many years past been establishing itself in Scotland among the minor domestic virtues. Once established it will never decay; for it must be felt to brighten, more than could be imagined by our fathers, the whole aspect of life. No need for any other household fairy to sweep this floor. An orderly creature we have seen she is, from all her movements out and in doors—though the guest of but an hour. They have told us that they had known what are called better days—and were once in a thriving way of business in a town. But they were born and bred in the country; and their manners, not rustic but rural,

breathe of its serene and simple spirit—at once Lowland and Highland—to us a pleasant union, not without a certain charm of grace.

What loose leaves are those lying on the Bible? A few odd numbers of the SCOTTISH CHRISTIAN HERALD. We shall take care, our friends, that all the Numbers, bound in three large volumes, shall, ere many weeks elapse, be lying for you at the Manse. Let us recite to you, our worthy friends, a small sacred Poem, which we have by heart. Christian, keep your eye on the page, and if we go wrong, do not fear to set us right. Can you say many psalms and hymns? But we need not ask—for

"Piety is sweet to infant minds;"

what they love they remember—for how easy—how happy—to get dear things by heart! Happiest of all—the things held holy on earth as in heaven—because appertaining here to Eternal Life.

TO THE SCOTTISH CHRISTIAN HERALD. BY THE REV. DUNCAN GRANT, A.M., MINISTER OF FORRES.

"Beauteous on our heath-clad mountains,
May our HERALD'S feet appear;
Sweet, by silver lakes and fountains,
May his voice be to our ear.
Let the tenants of our rocks,
Shepherds watching o'er their flocks,
Village swain and peasant boy,
Thee salute with songs of joy!

"CHRISTIAN HERALD! spread the story
Of Redemption's wondrous plan;
'Tis Jehovah's brightest glory,
'Tis his highest gift to man;

Angels on their harps of gold,
Love its glories to unfold;
Heralds who its influence wield,
Make the waste a fruitful field.

" To the fount of mercy soaring,
On the wings of faith and love;
And the depths of grace exploring,
By the light shed from above;
Show us whence life's waters flow,
And where trees of blessing grow,
Bearing fruit of heavenly bloom,
Breathing Eden's rich perfume.

" Love to God and man expressing,
In thy course of mercy speed;
Lead to springs of joy and blessing,
And with heavenly manna feed
Scotland's children high and low,
Till the Lord they truly know:
As to us our fathers told,
He was known by them of old.

" To the young, in season vernal,
Jesus in his grace disclose;
As the tree of life eternal,
'Neath whose shade they may repose,
Shielded from the noontide ray,
And from ev'ning's tribes of prey;
And refresh'd with fruits of love,
And with music from above.

" Christian Herald! may the blessing
Of the Highest thee attend,
That, this chiefest boon possessing,
Thou may'st prove thy country's friend:
Tend to make our land assume
Something of its former bloom,
When the dews of heaven were seen
Sparkling on its pastures green,

" When the voice of warm devotion
To the throne of God arose—
Mighty as the sound of ocean,
Calm as nature in repose;—

Sweeter, than when Araby
Perfume breathes from flow'r and tree,
Rising 'bove the shining sphere,
To Jehovah's list'ning ear."

It is time we were going—but we wish to hear how thy voice sounds, Christian, when it reads. So read these same verses, first "into yoursel'," and then to us. They speak of mercies above your comprehension, and ours, and all men's; for they speak of the infinite goodness and mercy of God—but though thou hast committed in thy short life no sins, or but small, towards thy fellow-creatures—how couldst thou? yet thou knowest we are all sinful in His eyes, and thou knowest on whose merits is the reliance of our hopes of Heaven. Thank you, Christian. Three minutes from two by your house-clock—she gives a clear warning—and three minutes from two by our watch—rather curious this coincidence to such a nicety—we must take up our Crutch and go. Thank thee, bonnie wee Christian—in wi' the bannocks intil our pouch—but we fear you must take us for a sad glutton.

"Zicketty, dicketty, dock,
The mouse ran up the clock;
The clock struck one,
Down the mouse ran,
Zicketty, dicketty, dock."

Come closer, Christian—and let us put it to thine ear. What a pretty face of wonder at the chime! Good people, you have work to do in the hay-field—let us part—God bless you—Good-by—farewell!

Half an hour since we parted—we cannot help being a little sad—and fear we were not so kind to the old people—not so considerate as we ought to have been—and perhaps though pleased with us just now, they may say to one another before evening that we were too merry for our years. Nonsense. We were all merry together—daft Uncle amang the lave—for the creature came stealing in and sat down on his own stool in the corner; and what's the use of wearing a long face at all times like a Methodist minister? A Methodist minister! Why, John Wesley was facete, and Whitfield humorous, and Rowland Hill witty—though he, we believe, was not a Methody; yet were their hearts fountains of tears—and ours is not a rock—if it be, 'tis the rock of Horeb.

Ha, Hamish! Here we are beneath the Merlin Crag. What sport? Why, five brace is not so much amiss—and they are thumpers. Fifteen brace in all. Ducks and flappers? Seven leash. We are getting on.

> "But what are these,
> So wither'd and so wild in their attire;
> That look not like th' inhabitants o' the earth,
> And yet are on't? Live you? or are you aught
> That man may question. You seem to understand me,
> By each at once her choppy finger laying
> Upon her skinny lips:—you should be women,
> And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
> That you are so!"

Shakspeare is not familiar, we find, among the natives of Loch-Etive side—else these figures would reply,

> "All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, Thane of Glammis!"

But not satisfied with laying their choppy fingers on their skinny lips, they now put them to their plooky noses, having first each dipped fore and thumb in his mull, and gibber Gaelic, to us unintelligible as the quacking of ducks, when a Christian auditor has been prevented from catching its meaning by the gobbling of turkeys.

Witches at the least, and about to prophesy to us some pleasant events, that are to terminate disastrously in after years. Is there no nook of earth perfectly solitary—but must natural or supernatural footsteps haunt the remotest and most central places? But now we shall have our fortunes told in choice Earse, for sure these are the Children of the Mist, and perhaps they will favour us with a running commentary on Ossian. Stout, grim, heather-legged bodies they are, one and all, and luckily we are provided with snuff and tobacco sufficient for the whole crew. Were they even ghosts they will not refuse a sneeshin', and a Highland spirit will look picturesque puffing a cigar!—Hark! we know them and their vocation. These are the Genii of the Mountain-dew; and their hidden enginery, depend on't, is not far off, but buried in the bowels of some brae. See!—a faint mist dissipating itself over the heather! There—at work, shaming the idle waste, and in use and wont to break even the Sabbath-day, is a STILL!

Do we look like Excisemen? The Crutch has indeed a suspicious family resemblance to a gauging-rod; and literary characters, like us, may well be mistaken for the Supervisor himself. But the smug-

gler's eye knows his enemy at a glance, as the fox knows a hound; and the whispering group discern at once that we are of a nobler breed. That one fear dispelled, Highland hospitality bids us welcome, even into the mouth of the malt-kiln, and, with a smack on our loof, the Chief volunteers to initiate us into the grand mysteries of the Worm.

The turf-door is flung outward on its lithe hinges, and already what a gracious smell! In we go, ushered by unbonneted Celts, gentlemen in manners wherever the kilt is worn; for the tartan is the symbol of courtesy, and Mac a good password all the world over between man and man. Lowland eyes are apt to water in the peat-reek, but erelong we shall have another "drappie in our e'e," and drink to the Clans in the "unchristened cretur." What a sad neglect in our education, among all the acquired lingoes extant, to have overlooked the Gaelic! Yet nobody who has ever heard P. R. preach an Earse Sermon, need despair of discoursing in that tongue after an hour's practice; so let us forget, if possible, every word of English, and the language now needed will rise up in its place.

And these figures in men's coats and women's petticoats are females? We are willing to believe it in spite of their beards. One of them absolutely suckling a child! Thank you, my dear sir, but we cannot swallow the contents of that quech. Yet, let us try.—A little too warm, and rather harsh; but meat and drink to a man of age. That seems to be goat-milk cheese, and the scones are barley; and they and the speerit will

wash one another down in an amicable plea, nor quarrel at close quarters. Honey too—heather-honey of this blessed year's produce. Hecate's forefinger mixes it in a quech with mountain-dew—and that is Athole-brose?

There cannot be the least doubt in the world that the Hamiltonian system of teaching languages is one of the best ever invented. It will enable any pupil of common-run powers of attention to read any part of the New Testament in Greek in some twenty lessons of an hour each. But what is that to the Principle of the Worm? Half a blessed hour has not elapsed since we entered into the door of this hill-house, and we offer twenty to one that we read Ossian, *ad aperturam libri*, in the original Gaelic. We feel as if we could translate the works of Jeremy Bentham into that tongue—ay, even Francis Maximus Macnab's Theory of the Universe. We guarantee ourselves to do both, this identical night before we go to sleep, and if the printers are busy during the intermediate hours, to correct the press in the morning. Why, there are not above five thousand roots—but we are getting a little gizzy—into a state of civilation in the wilderness—and, gentlemen, let us drink—in solemn silence—the "Memory of Fingal."

O St Cecilia! we did not lay our account with a bagpipe! What is the competition of pipers in the Edinburgh Theatre, small as it is, to this damnable drone in an earth-cell, eight feet by six! Yet while the drums of our ears are continuing to split like old parchment title-deeds to lands nowhere existing, and all our animal economy, from finger to toe, is one agonizing

dirl, Æolus himself sits as proud as Lucifer in Pandemonium; and as the old soldiers keep tending the Worm in the reek as if all were silence, the male-looking females, and especially the he-she with the imp at her breast, nod, and smirk, and smile, and snap their fingers, in a challenge to a straspey—and, by all that is horrible, a red hairy arm is round our neck, and we are half-choked with the fumes of whisky-kisses. An hour ago, we were dreaming of Malvina! and here she is with a vengeance, while we in the character of Oscar are embraced till almost all the Lowland breath in our body expires.

And this is STILL-LIFE?

Extraordinary it is, that, go where we will, we are in a wonderfully short time discovered to be Christopher North. A few years ago, the instant we found our feet in a mine in Cornwall, after a descent of about one-third the bored earth's diameter, we were saluted by name by a grim Monops who had not seen the upper regions for years, preferring the interior of the planet; and forthwith, "Christopher North," "Christopher North," reverberated along the galleries, while the gnomes came flocking in all directions, with safety-lamps, to catch a glimpse of the famous Editor. On another occasion, we remember when coasting the south of Ireland in our schooner, falling in with a boat like a cockle-shell, well out of the Bay of Bantry, and of the three half-naked Paddies that were ensnaring the finny race, two smoked us at the helm, and bawled out, "Kitty go bragh!" Were we to go up in a balloon, and by any

accident descend in the interior of Africa, we have not the slightest doubt that Sultan Belloo would know us in a jiffy, having heard our person so frequently described by Major Denham and Captain Clapperton. So we are known, it seems, in the Still—by the men of the Worm? Yes—the principal proprietor in the concern is a schoolmaster over about Loch-Earn-Head—a man of no mean literary abilities, and an occasional contributor to the Magazine. He visits The Shop in breeches—but now mounts the kilt—and astonishes us by the versatility of his talents. In one of the most active working bees we recognize a caddy, formerly in Auld Reeky ycleped "The Despatch," now retired to the Braes of Balquhidder, and breathing strongly the spirit of his youth. With that heather-houghed gentleman, fiery-tressed as the God of Day, we were, for the quarter of a century that we held a large grazing farm, in the annual practice of drinking a gill at the Falkirk Tryst; and—wonderful, indeed, to think how old friends meet, we were present at the amputation of the right leg of that timber-toed hero with the bushy whiskers—in the Hospital of Rosetta—having accompanied Sir David Baird's splendid Indian army to Egypt.

Shying, for the present, the question in Political Economy, and viewing the subject in a moral, social, and poetical light, what, pray, is the true influence of THE STILL? It makes people idle. Idle? What species of idleness is that which consists in being up night and day—traversing moors and mountains in all weathers—constantly contriving the most skilful expedients for

misleading the Excise, and which on some disastrous day, when dragoons suddenly shake the desert—when all is lost except honour—hundreds of gallons of wash (alas! alas! a-day!) wickedly wasted among the heather-roots, and the whole beautiful Apparatus lying battered and spiritless in the sun beneath the accursed blows of the Pagans—returns, after a few weeks set apart to natural grief and indignation, with unabated energy, to the selfsame work, even within view of the former ruins, and pouring out a libation of the first amalgamated hotness that deserves the name of speerit, devotes the whole Board of Excise to the Infernal Gods?

The argument of idleness has not a leg to stand on, and falls at once to the ground.—But the Still makes men dishonest. We grant that there is a certain degree of dishonesty in cheating the Excise; and we shall allow yourself to fix it, who give as fine a caulker from the sma' still, as any moral writer on Honesty with whom we have the pleasure occasionally to take a family dinner. But the poor fellows either grow or purchase their own malt. They do not steal it; and many is the silent benediction that we have breathed over a bit patch of barley, far up on its stoney soil among the hills, bethinking us that it would yield up its precious spirit unexcised! Neither do they charge for it any very extravagant price—for what is twelve, fourteen, twenty shillings a-gallon for such drink divine as is now steaming before us in that celestial caldron?

Having thus got rid of the charge of idleness and

dishonesty, nothing more needs to be said on the Moral Influence of the Still; and we come now, in the second place, to consider it in a Social Light. The biggest bigot will not dare to deny, that without whisky the Highlands of Scotland would be uninhabitable. And if all the population were gone, or extinct, where then would be your social life? Smugglers are seldom drunkards; neither are they men of boisterous manners or savage dispositions. In general, they are grave, sedate, peaceable characters, not unlike elders of the kirk. Even Excisemen admit them, except on rare occasions when human patience is exhausted, to be merciful. Four pleasanter men do not now exist in the bosom of the earth, than the friends with whom we are now on the hob-nob. Stolen waters are sweet—a profound and beautiful reflection—and no doubt originally made by some peripatetic philosopher at a Still. The very soul of the strong drink evaporates with the touch of the gauger's wand. An evil day would it indeed be for Scotland, that should witness the extinguishment of all her free and unlicensed mountain stills! The charm of Highland hospitality would be wan aud withered, and the *doch an dorras*, instead of a blessing, would sound like a ban.

We have said that smugglers are never drunkards, not forgetting that general rules are proved by exceptions; nay, we go farther, and declare that the Highlanders are the soberest people in Europe. Whisky is to them a cordial, a medicine, a life-preserver. Chief of the umbrella and wraprascal! were you ever in the Highlands? We shall produce a single day from any of the

fifty-two weeks of the year that will outargue you on the present subject, in half-an-hour. What sound is that? The rushing of rain from heaven, and the sudden outcry of a thousand waterfalls. Look through a chink in the bothy, and far as you can see for the mists, the heath-covered desert is steaming like the smoke of a smouldering fire. Winds biting as winter come sweeping on their invisible chariots armed with scythes, down every glen, and scatter far and wide over the mountains the spray of the raging lochs. Now you have a taste of the summer cold, more dangerous far than that of Yule, for it often strikes "aitches" into the unprepared bones, and congeals the blood of the shelterless shepherd on the hill. But one glorious gurgle of the speerit down the throat of a storm-stayed man! and bold as a rainbow he faces the reappearing sun, and feels assured (though there he may be mistaken) of dying at a good old age.

Then think, oh think, how miserably poor are most of those men who have fought our battles, and so often reddened their bayonets in defence of our liberties and our laws! Would you grudge them a little whisky? And depend upon it, a little is the most, taking one day of the year with another, that they imbibe. You figure to yourself two hundred thousand Highlanders, taking snuff, and chewing tobacco, and drinking whisky, all year long. Why, one pound of snuff, two of tobacco, and two gallons of whisky, would be beyond the mark of the yearly allowance of every grown-up man! Thousands never taste such luxuries at all—

meal and water, potatoes and salt, their only food. The animal food, sir, and the fermented liquors of various kinds, Foreign and British, which to our certain knowledge you have swallowed within the last twelve months, would have sufficed for fifty families in our abstemious region of mist and snow. We have known you drink a bottle of champagne, a bottle of port, and two bottles of claret, frequently at a sitting, equal, in prime cost, to three gallons of the best Glenlivet! And You (who, by the way, are an English clergyman, a circumstance we had entirely forgotten, and have published a Discourse against Drunkenness, dedicated to a Bishop) pour forth the Lamentations of Jeremiah over the sinful multitude of Small Stills! Hypocrisy! hypocrisy! where shalt thou hide thy many-coloured sides?

Whisky is found by experience to be, on the whole, a blessing in so misty and mountainous a country. It destroys disease and banishes death; without some such stimulant the people would die of cold. You will see a fine old Gael, of ninety or a hundred, turn up his little finger to a caulker with an air of patriarchal solemnity altogether scriptural; his great-grandchildren eyeing him with the most respectful affection, and the youngest of them toddling across the floor, to take the quech from his huge, withered, and hairy hand, which he lays on the amiable Joseph's sleek craniology, with a blessing heartier through the Glenlivet, and with all the earnestness of religion. There is no disgrace in getting drunk—in the Highlands—not even if you are of the above standing—for where the people are so poor, such a state is

but of rare occurrence; while it is felt all over the land of sleet and snow, that a 'drap o' the creatur' is a very necessary of life, and that but for its 'dew' the mountains would be uninhabitable. At fairs, and funerals, and marriages, and suchlike merry meetings, sobriety is sent to look after the sheep; but, except on charitable occasions of that kind, sobriety stays at home among the peat-reek, and is contented with crowdy. Who that ever stooped his head beneath a Highland hut would grudge a few gallons of Glenlivet to its poor but unrepining inmates? The seldomer they get drunk the better—and it is but seldom they do so; but let the rich man—the monied moralist, who bewails and begrudges the Gael a modicum of the liquor of life, remember the doom of a certain Dives, who, in a certain place that shall now be nameless, cried, but cried in vain, for a drop of water. Lord bless the Highlanders, say we, for the most harmless, hospitable, peaceable, brave people that ever despised breeches, blew pibrochs, took invincible standards, and believed in the authenticity of Ossian's poems. In that pure and lofty region ignorance is not, as elsewhere, the mother of vice—penury cannot repress the noble rage of the mountaineer as "he sings aloud old songs that are the music of the heart;" while superstition herself has an elevating influence, and will be suffered, even by religion, to show her shadowy shape and mutter her wild voice through the gloom that lies on the heads of the remote glens, and among the thousand caves of echo in her iron-bound coasts, dashed on for ever—night and day—summer and winter—by those sleepless seas,

who have no sooner laid their heads on the pillow than up they start with a howl that cleaves the Orcades, and away off in search of shipwrecks round the corner of Cape Wrath."

In the third place, what shall we say of the poetical influence of STILLS? What more poetical life can there be than that of the men with whom we are now quaffing the barley-bree? They live with the moon and stars. All the night winds are their familiars. If there be such things as ghosts, and fairies, and apparitions—and that there are, no man who has travelled much by himself after sunset will deny, except from the mere love of contradiction—they see them; or when invisible, which they generally are, hear them—here—there—every where—in sky, forest, cave, or hollow-sounding world immediately beneath their feet. Many poets walk these wilds; nor do their songs perish. They publish not with Blackwood or with Murray—but for centuries on centuries, such songs are the preservers, often the sources, of the oral traditions that go glimmering and gathering down the stream of years. Native are they to the mountains as the blooming heather, nor shall they ever cease to invest them with the light of poetry—in defiance of large farms, Methodist preachers, and the Caledonian Canal.

People are proud of talking of solitude. It redounds, they opine, to the honour of their great-mindedness to be thought capable of living, for an hour or two, by themselves, at a considerable distance from knots or skeins of their fellow-creatures. Byron, again, thought

he showed his superiority, by swearing as solemnly as a man can do in the Spenserian stanza, that

"To sit alone, and muse o'er flood and fell,"

has nothing whatever to do with solitude—and that, if you wish to know and feel what solitude really is, you must go to Almack's.

"This—this is solitude—this is to be alone!"

His Lordship's opinions were often peculiar—but the passage has been much admired; therefore we are willing to believe that the Great Desert is, in point of loneliness, unable to stand a philosophical, much less a poetical comparison, with a well-frequented Fancy-ball. But is the statement not borne out by facts? Zoology is on its side—more especially two of its most interesting branches, Entomology and Ornithology.

Go to a desert and clap your back against a cliff. Do you think yourself alone? What a ninny! Your great clumsy splay feet are bruising to death a batch of beetles. See that spider whom you have widowed, running up and down your elegant leg, in distraction and despair, bewailing the loss of a husband who, however savage to the ephemerals, had always smiled sweetly upon her. Meanwhile, your shoulders have crushed a colony of small red ants settled in a moss city beautifully roofed with lichens—and that accounts for the sharp tickling behind your ear, which you keep scratching, no Solomon, in ignorance of the cause of that effect. Should you sit down—we must beg to draw a veil over

your hurdies, which at the moment extinguish a fearful amount of animal life—creation may be said to groan under them; and, insect as you are yourself, you are defrauding millions of insects of their little day. All the while you are supposing yourself alone! Now, are you not, as we hinted, a prodigious ninny? But the whole wilderness—as you choose to call it—is crawling with various life. London, with its million and a half of inhabitants—including of course the suburbs—is, compared with it, an empty joke. Die—and you will soon be picked to the bones. The air swarms with sharpers—and an insurrection of radicals will attack your corpse from the worm-holes of the earth. Corbies, ravens, hawks, eagles, all the feathered furies of beak and bill, will come flying ere sunset to anticipate the maggots, and carry your remains—if you will allow us to call them so—over the whole of Argyleshire in many living sepulchres. We confess ourselves unable to see the solitude of this—and begin to agree with Byron, that a man is less crowded at a masquerade.

But the same subject may be illustrated less tragically, and even with some slight comic effect. A man among mountains is often surrounded on all sides with mice and moles. What cozy nests do the former construct at the roots of heather, among tufts of grass in the rushes, and the moss on the greensward! As for the latter, though you think you know a mountain from a molehill, you are much mistaken; for what is a mountain, in many cases, but a collection of molehills—and of fairy knolls?—which again introduce a new element

into the composition, and show, in still more glaring colours, your absurdity in supposing yourself to be in solitude. The "Silent People" are around you at every step. You may not see them—for they are dressed in invisible green; but they see you, and that unaccountable whispering and buzzing sound one often hears in what we call the wilderness, what is it, or what can it be, but the fairies making merry at your expense, pointing out to each other the extreme silliness of your meditative countenance, and laughing like to split at your fond conceit of being alone among a multitude of creatures far wiser than yourself.

But should all this fail to convince you, that you are never less alone than when you think yourself alone, and that a man never knows what it is to be in the very heart of life till he leaves London, and takes a walk in Glen-Etive—suppose yourself to have been leaning with your back against that knoll, dreaming of the far-off race of men, when all at once the support gives way inwards, and you tumble head over heels in among a snug coterie of kilted Celts, in the very act of creating Glenlivet in a great warlock's caldron, seething to the top with the Spirit of Life!

Such fancies as these, among many others, were with us in the Still. But a glimmering and a humming and a dizzy bewilderment hangs over that time and place, finally dying away into oblivion. Here are we sitting in a glade of a birch-wood in what must be Gleno—some miles from the Still. Hamish asleep, as usual, whenever he lies down, and all the dogs yowffing in dreams,

and Surefoot standing with his long beard above ours, almost the same in longitude. We have been more, we suspect, than half-seas over, and are now lying on the shore of sobriety, almost a wreck. The truth is, that the new spirit is even more dangerous than the new light. Both at first dazzle, then obfuscate, and lastly darken into temporary death. There is, we fear, but one word of one syllable in the English language that could fully express our late condition. Let our readers solve the enigma. Oh! those quechs! By

> "What drugs, what spells,
> What conjurations, and what mighty magic"

was Christopher overthrown! A strange confusion of sexes, as of men in petticoats and women in breeches—gowns transmogrified into jackets—caps into bonnets—and thick naked hairy legs into slim ankles decent in hose—all somewhere whirling and dancing by, dim and obscure, to the sound of something groaning and yelling, sometimes inarticulately, as if it came from something instrumental, and then mixed up with a wild gibberish, as if shrieking, somehow or other, from living lips, human and brute—for a dream of yowling dogs is over all—utterly confounds us as we strive to muster in recollection the few last hours that have passed tumultuously through our brain—and then a wide black moor, sometimes covered with day, sometimes with night, stretches around us, hemmed in on all sides by the tops of mountains, seeming to reel in the sky. Frequent flashes of fire, and a whirring as of the wings of birds—but sound and sight alike uncertain—break again upon

our dream. Let us not mince the matter—we can afford the confession—we have been overtaken by liquor—sadly intoxicated—out with it at once! Frown not, fairest of all sweet—for we lay our calamity, not to the charge of the Glenlivet circling in countless quechs, but at the door of that inveterate enemy to sobriety—the Fresh Air.

But now we are as sober as a judge. Pity our misfortune—rather than forgive our sin. We entered that Still in a State of innocence before the Fall. Where we fell, we know not—in divers ways and sundry places—between that magic cell on the breast of Benachochie, and this glade in Gleno. But,

"There are worse things in life than a fall among heather."

Surefoot, we suppose, kept himself tolerably sober—and O'Bronte, at each successive cloit, must have assisted us to remount—for Hamish, from his style of sleeping, must have been as bad as his master; and, after all, it is wonderful to think how we got here—over hags and mosses, and marshes and quagmires, like those in which "armies whole have sunk." But the truth is, that, never in the whole course of our lives—and that course has been a strange one—did we ever so often as once lose our way. Set us down blindfolded on Zahara, and we will beat the caravan to Timbuctoo. Something or other mysteriously indicative of the right direction touches the soles of our feet in the shape of the ground they tread; and even when our souls have gone soaring far away, or have sunk within us, still have our feet pursued the shortest and the safest path that leads to the

bourne of our pilgrimage. Is not that strange? But not stranger surely than the flight of the bee, on his first voyage over the coves of the wilderness to the far-off heather-bells—or of the dove that is sent by some Jew stockjobber, to communicate to Dutchmen the rise or fall of the funds, from London to Hamburgh, from the clear shores of silver Thames to the muddy shallows of the Zuyder-Zee.

THE MOORS.

FLIGHT FOURTH—DOWN RIVER AND UP LOCH.

Let us inspect the state of Brown Bess. Right barrel empty—left barrel—what is the meaning of this?—crammed to the muzzle! Ay, that comes of visiting Stills. We have been snapping away at the coveys and single birds all over the moor, without so much as a pluff, with the right-hand cock—and then, imagining that we had fired, have kept loading away at the bore to the left, till, see! the ramrod absolutely stands upright in the air, with only about three inches hidden in the hollow! What a narrow—a miraculous escape has the world had of losing Christopher North! Had he drawn that trigger instead of this, Brown Bess would have burst to a moral certainty, and blown the old gentleman piecemeal over the heather. "In the midst of life we are in death!" Could we but know one in a hundred of the close approachings of the skele-

ton, we should lead a life of perpetual shudder. Often and often do his bony fingers almost clutch our throat, or his foot is put out to give us a cross-buttock. But a saving arm pulls him back, ere we have seen so much as his shadow. We believe all this—but the belief that comes not from something steadfastly present before our eyes, is barren; and thus it is, since believing is not seeing, that we walk hoodwinked nearly all our days, and worst of all blindness is that of ingratitude and forgetfulness of Him whose shield is for ever over us, and whose mercy shall be with us in the world beyond the grave.

By all that is most beautifully wild in animated nature, a Roe! a Roe! Shall we slay him where he stands, or let him vanish in silent glidings in among his native woods? What a fool for asking ourselves such a question! Slay him where he stands to be sure—for many pleasant seasons hath he led in his leafy lairs, a life of leisure, delight, and love, and the hour is come when he must sink down on his knees in a sudden and unpainful death—fair silvan dreamer! We have drawn that multitudinous shot—and both barrels of Brown Bess now are loaded with ball—for Hamish is yet lying with his head on the rifle. Whiz! whiz! one is through lungs, and another through neck—and seemingly rather to sleep than die, (so various are the many modes of expiration!)

> "In quietness he lays him down
> Gently, as a weary wave
> Sinks, when the summer breeze has died,
> Against an anchor'd vessel's side."

Ay—Hamish—you may start to your feet—and see realized the vision of your sleep. What a set of distracted dogs! But O'Bronte first catches sight of the quarry—and clearing, with grashopper spangs, the patches of stunted coppice, stops stock-still beside the roe in the glade, as if admiring and wondering at the beauty of the fair spotted creature! Yes, dogs have a sense of the beautiful. Else how can you account for their loving so to lie down at the feet and lick the hands of the virgin whose eyes are mild, and forehead meek, and hair of placid sunshine, rather than act the same part towards ugly women, who, coarser and coarser in each successive widowhood, when at their fourth husband are beyond expression hideous, and felt to be so by the whole canine tribe? Spenser must have seen some dog like O'Bronte lying at the feet and licking the hand of some virgin—sweet reader, like thyself—else never had he painted the posture of that Lion who guarded through Fairyland

"Heavenly Una and her milkwhite lamb."

A divine line of Wordsworth's, which we shall never cease quoting on to the last of our inditings, even to our dying day!

But where, Hamish, are all the flappers, the mawsies, and the mallards? What! You have left them—hare, grouse, bag, and all, at the Still! We remember it now—and all the distillers are to-night to be at our Tent, bringing with them feathers, fur, and hide—ducks, pussy, and deer. But take the roe on your stalwart

shoulders, Hamish, and bear it down to the silvan dwelling at the mouth of Gleno. Surefoot has a sufficient burden in us—for we are waxing more corpulent every day—and erelong shall be a Silenus.

Ay, travel all the world over, and a human dwelling lovelier in its wildness shall you nowhere find, than the one that hides itself in the depth of its own beauty, beneath the last of the green knolls besprinkling Gleno, dropt down there in presence of the peacefulest bay of all Loch-Etive, in whose cloud-softened bosom it sees itself reflected among the congenial imagery of the skies. And, hark! a murmur as of swarming bees! 'Tis a Gaelic school—set down in this loneliest of all places, by that religious wisdom that rests not till the seeds of saving knowledge shall be sown over all the wilds. That greyhaired minister of God, whom all Scotland venerates, hath been here from the great city on one of his holy pilgrimages. And, lo! at his bidding, and that of his coadjutors in the heavenly work, a Schoolhouse has risen with its blue roof—the pure diamond-sparkling slates of Ballahulish—beneath a tuft of breeze-breaking trees. But whence come they—the little scholars—who are all murmuring there? We said that the shores of Loch-Etive were desolate. So seem they to the eye of Imagination, that loves to gather up a hundred scenes into one, and to breathe over the whole the lonesome spirit of one vast wilderness. But Imagination was a liar ever—a romancer and a dealer in dreams. Hers are the realms of fiction,

"A boundless contiguity of shade!"

But the land of truth is ever the haunt of the heart—there her eye reposes or expatiates, and what sweet, humble, and lowly visions arise before it, in a light that fadeth not away, but abideth for ever! Cottages, huts, shielings; she sees hidden—few and far between indeed—but all filled with Christian life—among the hollows of the hills—and up, all the way up the great glens—and by the shores of the loneliest lochs—and sprinkled, not so rarely, among the woods that enclose little fields and meadows of their own—all the way down—more and more animated—till children are seen gathering before their doors the shells of the contiguous sea.

Look and listen far and wide through a sunshiny day, over a rich wooded region, with hedgerows, single trees, groves, and forests, and yet haply not one bird is to be seen or heard—neither plumage nor song. Yet many a bright lyrist is there, all mute till the harbinger-hour of sunset, when all earth, air, and heaven, shall be ringing with one song. Almost even so is it with this mountain-wilderness. Small bright-haired, bright-eyed, bright-faced children, come stealing out in the morning from many hidden huts, each solitary in its own site, the sole dwelling on its own brae or its own dell. Singing go they one and all, alone or in small bands, trippingly along the wide moors; meeting into pleasant parties at cross paths, or at fords, till one stated hour sees them all gathered together, as now in the small Schoolhouse of Gleno, and the echo of the happy hum of the simple scholars is heard soft among the cliffs. But all at once the hum now ceases, and there is a hurry out of doors,

and an exulting cry; for the shadow of Hamish, with the roe on his shoulders, has passed the small lead-latticed window, and the Schoolroom has emptied itself on the green, which is now brightening with the young blossoms of life. "A roe—a roe—a roe!"—is still the chorus of their song; and the Schoolmaster himself, though educated at college for the kirk, has not lost the least particle of his passion for the chase, and with kindling eyes assists Hamish in laying down his burden, and gazes on the spots with a hunter's joy. We leave you to imagine his delight and his surprise when, at first hardly trusting his optics, he beholds CHRISTOPHER ON SUREFOOT, and then, patting the shelty on the shoulder, bows affectionately and respectfully to the Old Man, and while our hands grasp, takes a pleasure in repeating over and over again that celebrated surname—North —North—North.

After a brief and bright hour of glee and merriment, mingled with grave talk, nor marred by the sweet undisturbance of all those elves maddening on the Green around the Roe, we express a wish that the scholars may all again be gathered together in the Schoolroom, to undergo an examination by the Christian Philosopher of Buchanan Lodge. 'Tis in all things gentle, in nothing severe. All slates are instantly covered with numerals, and 'tis pleasant to see their skill in finest fractions, and in the wonder-working golden rule of three. And now the rustling of their manuals is like that of rainy breezes among the summer leaves. No fears are here that the Book of God will lose its sanctity by becoming too

familiar to eye, lip, and hand. Like the sunlight in the sky, the light that shines there is for ever dear—and unlike any sunlight in any skies, never is it clouded, permanently bright, and undimmed before pious eyes by one single shadow. We ought, perhaps, to be ashamed, but we are not so—we are happy that not an urchin is there who is not fully better acquainted with the events and incidents recorded in the Old and New Testaments than ourselves; and think not that all these could have been so faithfully committed to memory without the perpetual operation of the heart. Words are forgotten unless they are embalmed in spirit; and the air of the world, blow afterwards rudely as it may, shall never shrivel up one syllable that has been steeped into their souls by the spirit of the Gospel—felt by these almost infant disciples of Christ to be the very breath of God.

It has turned out one of the sweetest and serenest afternoons that ever breathed a hush over the face and bosom of August woods. Can we find it in our mind to think, in our heart to feel, in our hand to write that Scotland is now even more beautiful than in our youth! No—not in our heart to feel—but in our eyes to see—for they tell us it is the truth. The people have cared for the land which the Lord their God hath given them, and have made the wilderness to blossom like the rose. The same Arts that have raised their condition have brightened their habitation; Agriculture, by fertilizing the loveliness of the low-lying vales, has sublimed the sterility of the stupendous mountain heights—and the

thundrous tides, flowing up the lochs, bring power to the cornfields and pastures created on hillsides once horrid with rocks. The whole country laughs with a more vivid verdure—more pure the flow of her streams and rivers—for many a fen and marsh have been made dry, and the rainbow pictures itself on clearer cataracts.

The Highlands were, in our memory, overspread with a too dreary gloom. Vast tracts there were in which Nature herself seemed miserable; and if the heart find no human happiness to repose on, Imagination will fold her wings, or flee away to other regions, where in her own visionary world she may soar at will, and at will stoop down to the homes of this real earth. Assuredly the inhabitants are happier than they then were—*better off*—and therefore the change, whatever loss it may comprehend, has been a gain in good. Alas! poverty—penury—want—even of the necessaries of life—are too often there still rife; but patience and endurance dwell there, heroic and better far, Christian—nor has Charity been slow to succour regions remote but not inaccessible, Charity acting in power delegated by Heaven to our National Councils. And thus we can think not only without sadness, but with an elevation of soul inspired by such example of highest virtue in humblest estate, and in our own sphere exposed to other trials be induced to follow it, set to us in many "a virtuous household, though exceeding poor." What are all the poetical fancies about "mountain scenery," that ever fluttered on the leaves of albums, in comparison with any scheme, however prosaic,

that tends in any way to increase human comforts? The best sonnet that ever was written by a versifier from the South to the Crown of Benlomond, is not worth the worst pair of worsted stockings trotted in by a small Celt going with his dad to seek for a lost sheep among the snow-wreaths round his base. As for eagles, and ravens, and red deer, "those magnificent creatures so stately and bright," let them shift for themselves—and perhaps in spite of all our rhapsodies—the fewer of them the better—but among geese, and turkeys, and poultry, let propagation flourish—the fleecy folk baa—and the hairy hordes bellow on a thousand hills. All the beauty and sublimity on earth—over the Four Quarters of the World—is not worth a straw if valued against a good harvest. An average crop is satisfactory; but a crop that soars high above an average—a golden year of golden ears—sends joy into the heart of heaven. No prating now of the degeneracy of the potatoe. We can sing now with our single voice, like a numerous chorus, of

"Potatoes drest both ways, both roasted and boiled;"

Sixty bolls to the acre on a field of our own of twenty acres—mealier than any meal—Perth reds—to the hue on whose cheeks dull was that on the face of the Fair Maid of Perth, when she blushed to confess to Burn-y-win' that hand-over-hip he had struck the iron when it was hot, and that she was no more the Glover's. O bright are potato blooms!—O green are potato-shaws!—O yellow are potato plums! But how oft are blighted

summer hopes and broken summer promises! Spare not the shaw—heap high the mounds—that damp nor frost may dim a single eye; so that all winter through poor men may prosper, and spring see settings of such prolific vigour, that they shall yield a thousand-fold—and the sound of rumble-te-thumps be heard all over the land.

Let the people eat—let them have food for their bodies, and then they will have heart to care for their souls; and the good and the wise will look after their souls, with sure and certain hope of elevating them from their hovels to heaven, while prigs, with their eyes in a fine frenzy rolling, rail at railroads, and all the other vile inventions of an utilitarian age to open up and expedite communication between the Children of the Mist and the Sons and Daughters of the Sunshine, to the utter annihilation of the sublime Spirit of Solitude. Be under no sort of alarm for Nature. There is some talk, it is true, of a tunnel through Cruachan to the Black Mount, but the general impression seems to be that it will be a *great bore.* A joint-stock company that undertook to remove Ben Nevis, is beginning to find unexpected obstructions. Feasible as we confess it appeared, the idea of draining Loch Lomond has been relinquished for the easier and more useful scheme of converting the Clyde from below Stonebyres, to above the Bannatyne Fall, into a canal—the chief lock being, in the opinion of the most ingenious speculators, almost ready-made at Corra Linn.

Shall we never be done with our soliloquy? It may be a little longish, for age is prolix—but every whit as

natural and congenial with circumstances, as Hamlet's "to be or not to be, that is the question." O beloved Albin! our soul yearneth towards thee, and we invoke a blessing on thy many thousand glens. The man who leaves a blessing on any one of thy solitary places, and gives expression to a good thought in presence of a Christian brother, is a missionary of the church. What uncomplaining, and unrepining patience in thy solitary huts! What unshrinking endurance of physical pain and want, that might well shame the Stoic's philosophic pride! What calm contentment, akin to mirth, in so many lonesome households, hidden the greatest part of the year in mist and snow! What peaceful deathbeds, witnessed but by a few, a very few grave but tearless eyes! Ay, how many martyrdoms for the holy love and religion of nature, worse to endure than those of old at the stake, because protracted through years of sore distress, for ever on the very limit of famine, yet for ever far removed from despair! Such is the people among whom we seek to drop the books, whose sacred leaves are too often scattered to the winds, or buried in the dust of Pagan lands. Blessed is the fount from whose wisely managed munificence the small house of God will rise frequent in the wide and sea-divided wilds, with its humble associate, the heath-roofed school, in which, through the silence of nature, will be heard the murmuring voices of the children of the poor, instructed in the knowledge useful for time, and of avail for eternity.

We leave a loose sovereign or two to the Bible Fund;

and remounting Surefoot, while our friend the schoolmaster holds the stirrup tenderly to our toe, jog down the road which is rather alarmingly like the channel of a drought-dried torrent, and turning round on the saddle, send our farewell salutes to the gazing scholars, first, bonnet waved round our head, and then, that replaced, a kiss flung from our hand. Hamish, relieved of the roe, which will be taken up (how you shall by-and-by hear) on our way back to the Tent, is close at our side, to be ready should Shelty stumble; O'Bronte as usual bounds in the van, and Ponto, Piro, and Basta, impatient for the next heather hill, keep close at our heels through the wood.

We do not admire that shooting-ground which resembles a poultry-yard. Grouse and barn-door fowls are constructed on opposite principles, the former being wild, and the latter tame creatures, when in their respective perfection. Of all dull pastimes, the dullest seems to us sporting in a preserve; and we believe that we share that feeling with the Grand Signior. The sign of a lonely wayside inn in the Highlands, ought not to be the Hen and Chickens. Some shooters, we know, sick of common sport, love slaughter. From sunrise to sunset of the First Day of the Moors, they must bag their hundred brace. That can only be done where pouts prevail, and cheepers keep chiding; and where you have half-a-dozen attendants to hand you double-barrels sans intermission, for a round dozen of hours spent in a perpetual fire. Commend us to a plentiful sprinkling of game; to ground which seems occasionally barren, and which it needs a fine instructed eye to traverse scienti-

fically, and thereof to detect the latent riches. Fear and Hope are the Deities whom Christopher in his Sporting Jacket worships; and were they unpropitious, the Moors would lose all their witchcraft. We are a dead shot, but not always, for the forefinger of our right hand is the most fitful forefinger in all this capricious world. Like all performers in the Fine Arts, our execution is very uncertain; and though "*toujours pret*" is the impress on one side of our shield, "*hit and miss*" is that on the other, and often the more characteristic. A gentleman ought not to shoot like a gamekeeper, any more than at billiards to play like a marker, nor with four-in-hand ought he to tool his prads like the Portsmouth Dragsman. We choose to shoot like a philosopher as we are, and to preserve the golden mean in murder. We hold, with Aristotle, that all virtue consists in the middle, between the two extremes; and thus we shoot in a style equidistant from that of the gamekeeper on the one hand, and that of the bagman on the other, neither killing nor missing every bird; but, true to the spirit of the Aristotelian doctrine, leaning with a decided inclination towards the first rather than the second predicament. If we shoot too well one day, we are pretty sure to make amends for it by shooting just as much too ill another; and thus, at the close of the week, we can go to bed with a clear conscience. In short, we shoot like gentlemen, scholars, poets, philosophers as we are; and looking at us, you have a sight

> "Of him who walks (rides) in glory and in joy,
> Following his dog upon the mountain side,"—

a man evidently not shooting for a wager, and performing a match from the mean motive of avarice or ambition, but blazing away "at his own sweet will," and, without seeming to know it, making a great noise in the world. Such, believe us, is ever the mode in which true genius displays at once the earnestness and the modesty of its character.—But, Hamish—Hamish—Hamish—look with both thine eyes on yonder bank—yonder sunny bank, beneath the shade of that fantastic cliff's superincumbent shadow—and seest thou not basking there a miraculous amount of the right sort of feathers? They have packed, Hamish—they have packed, early as it yet is in the season; and the question is—*What shall we do?* We have it. Take up a position—Hamish—about a hundred yards in the rear—on yonder knoll—with the Colonel's Sweeper. Fire from the rest—mind, from the rest, Hamish—right into the centre of that bed of plumage, and we shall be ready, with Brown Bess and her sister, to pour in our quartette upon the remains as they rise—so that not escape shall one single feather. Let our coming "to the present" be your signal.—Bang! Whew!—what a flutter! Now take that—and that—and that—and that! Ha! Hamish—as at the springing of a mine, the whole company has perished. Count the dead. Twenty-one! Life is short—and by this compendious style we take Time by the forelock. But where the devil are the ducks? Oh, yes! with the deer at the Still. Bag, and be stirring. For the Salmon-pond is murmuring in our ear; and in another hour we must be at Inveraw. Who said that Cruachan was a

steep mountain? Why with a gentle, smooth, and easy slope, he dips his footsteps in the sea-salt waters of Loch-Etive's tide, as if to accommodate the old gentleman who, half-a-century ago, used to beard him in his pride on his throne of clouds. Heaven bless him!—he is a kind-hearted mountain, though his forehead be furrowed, and his aspect grim in stormy weather. A million memories "o' auld lang syne" revive, as almost "smooth-sliding without step" Surefoot travels through the silvan haunts, by us beloved of yore, when every day was a dream, and every dream filled to overflowing with poetic visions that swarmed on every bough, on every bent, on every heather-bell, in every dewdrop, in every mote o' the sun, in every line of gossamer, all over greenwood and greensward, grey cliff, purple heath, blue loch, "wine-faced sea,"

> "with locks divinely spreading,
> Like sullen hyacinths in vernal hue,"

and all over the sky, seeming then a glorious infinitude, where light, and joy, and beauty had their dwelling in calm and storm alike for evermore.

Heaven bless thee—with all her sun, moon, and stars! there thou art, dearest to us of all the lochs of Scotland—and they are all dear—mountain-crowned, cliff-guarded, isle-zoned, grove-girdled, wide-winding and far-stretching, with thy many-bayed banks and braes of brushwood, fern, broom, and heather, rejoicing in their huts and shielings, thou glory of Argyleshire, rill-and-river-fed, sea-arm-like, floating in thy majesty, magnificent Loch Awe!

Comparisons, so far from being odious, are always suggested to our hearts by the spirit of love. We behold Four Lochs—Loch Awe, before our bodily eyes, which sometimes sleep—Loch Lomond, Windermere, Killarney, before those other eyes of ours that are waking ever. The longest is Loch Awe, which from that bend below Sonnachan to distant Edderline, looks like a river. But cut off, with the soft scythe or sickle of fancy, twenty miles of the length of the mottled snake, who never coils himself up except in misty weather, and who is now lying outstretched in the sunshine, and the upper part, the head and shoulders, are of themselves a Loch. Pleasant are his many hills, and magnificent his one mountain. For you see but Cruachan. He is the master-spirit. Call him the noblest of Scotland's Kings. His subjects are princes; and gloriously they range around him, stretching high, wide, and far away, yet all owing visible allegiance to him their sole and undisputed sovereign. The setting and the rising sun do him homage. Peace loves—as now—to dwell within his shadow; but high among the precipices are the halls of the storms. Green are the shores as emerald. But the dark heather with its purple bloom sleeps in sombre shadow over wide regions of dusk, and there is an austere character in the cliffs. Moors and mosses intervene between holms and meadows, and those black spots are stacks of last year's peats—not huts, as you might think—but those other specks are huts, somewhat browner—few roofed with straw, almost all with heather—though

the better houses are slated—nor is there in the world to be found slate of a more beautiful pale green colour than in the quarries of Ballahulish. The scene is vast and wild; yet so much beauty is interfused, that at such an hour as this, its character is almost that of loveliness; the rude and rugged is felt to be rural, and no more; and the eye gliding from the cottage gardens on its banks, to the islands on the bosom of the Loch, loses sight of the mighty masses heaved up to the heavens, while the heart forgets that they are there, in its sweet repose. The dim-seen ruins of castle or religious house, secluded from all the stir that disturbed the shore, carries back our dreams to the olden time, and we awake from our reveries of "sorrows suffered long ago," to enjoy the apparent happiness of the living world.

Loch Lomond is a sea! Along its shores might you voyage in your swift schooner, with shifting breezes, all a summer's day, nor at sunset, when you dropped anchor, have seen half the beautiful wonders. It is many-isled; and some of them are in themselves little worlds, with woods and hills. Houses are seen looking out from among old trees, and children playing on the greensward that slopes safely into deep water, where in rushy havens are drawn up the boats of fishermen, or of woodcutters who go to their work on the mainland. You might live all your life on one of those islands, and yet be no hermit. Hundreds of small bays indent the shores, and some of a majestic character take a fine bold sweep with their towering groves, enclosing the mansion of a Col-

quhoun or a Campbell at enmity no more, or the turreted castle of the rich alien, who there finds himself as much at home as in his hereditary hall, Sassenach and Gaël now living in gentle friendship. What a prospect from the Point of Firkin! The Loch in its whole length and breadth—the magnificent expanse unbroken, though bedropped, with unnumbered isles—and the shores diversified with jutting cape and far-shooting peninsula, enclosing sweet separate seclusions, each in itself a loch. Ships might be sailing here, the largest ships of war; and there is anchorage for fleets. But the clear course of the lovely Leven is rock-crossed and intercepted with gravelly shallows, and guards Loch-Lomond from the white-winged roamers that from all seas come crowding into the Firth of Clyde, and carry their streaming flags above the woods of Ardgowan. And there stands Ben. What cares he for all the multitude of other lochs his gaze commands—what cares he even for the salt-sea foam tumbling far away off into the ocean? All-sufficient for his love is his own loch at his feet. How serenely looks down the Giant! Is there not something very sweet in his sunny smile? Yet were you to see him frown—as we have seen him—your heart would sink; and what would become of you—if all alone by your own single self, wandering over the wide moor that glooms in utter houselessness between his corries and Glenfalloch—what if you were to hear the strange mutterings we have heard, as if moaning from an earthquake among quagmires, till you felt that the sound came

from the sky, and all at once from the heart of night that had strangled day burst a shattering peal that might waken the dead—for Benlomond was in wrath, and vented it in thunder?

Perennially enjoying the blessing of a milder clime, and repaying the bounty of nature by beauty that bespeaks perpetual gratitude—merry as May, rich as June, shady as July, lustrous as August, and serene as September, for in her meet the characteristic charms of every season, all delightfully mingled by the happy genius of the place commissioned to pervade the whole from heaven, most lovely yet most majestic, we breathed the music of thy name, and start in this sterner solitude at the sweet syllabling of Windermere, Windermere! Translucent thy waters as diamond without a flaw. Unstained from source to sea are all the streams soft issuing from their silver springs among those beautiful mountains. Pure are they all as dew—and purer look the white clouds within their breast. These are indeed the Fortunate Groves! Happy is every tree. Blest the "Golden Oak," which seems to shine in lustre of his own, unborrowed from the sun. Fairer far the flower-tangled grass of those wood-encircled pastures than any meads of Asphodel. Thou need'st no isles on thy heavenly bosom, for in the sweet confusion of thy shores are seen the images of many isles, fragments that one might dream had been gently loosened from the land, and had floated away into the lake till they had lost themselves in the fairy wilderness. But though thou need'st them not, yet

hast thou, O Windermere! thine own steadfast and enduring isles—her called the Beautiful—and islets not far apart that seem born of her; for theirs the same expression of countenance—that of celestial calm—and, holiest of the sisterhood, one that still retains the ruins of an oratory, and bears the name of the Virgin Mother Mild, to whom prays the mariner when sailing, in the moonlight, along Sicilian seas.

Killarney! From the village of Cloghereen issued an uncouth figure, who called himself the "Man of the Mountain;" and pleased with Pan, we permitted him to blow his horn before us up to the top of Mangerton, where the Devil, 'tis believed, scooped out the sward beneath the cliffs into a Punch-bowl. No doubt he did, and the Old Potter wrought with fire. 'Tis the crater of an extinct volcano. Charles Fox, Weld says, and Wright doubts, swam the Pool. Why not? 'Tis not so cold as the Polar Sea. We swam across it—as Mulcocky, were he alive, but he is dead, could vouch; and felt braced like a drum. What a panorama! Our first feeling was one of grief that we were not an Irishman, We knew not where to fix our gaze. Surrounded by the dazzling bewilderment of all that multitudinous magnificence, the eye, as if afraid to grapple with the near glory—for such another day never shone from heaven—sought relief in the remote distance, and slid along the beautiful river Kenmare, insinuating itself among the recesses of the mountains, till it rested on the green glimmer of the far-off sea. The grandeur was felt, far

off as it was, of that iron-bound coast. Coming round with an easy sweep, as the eyes of an eagle may do, when hanging motionless aloft he but turns his head, our eyes took in all the mighty range of the Reeks, and rested in awe on Carran Tual. Wild yet gentle was the blue aerial haze over the glimpses of the Upper Lake, where soft and sweet, in a girdle of rocks, seemed to be hanging, now in air and now in water—for all was strangely indistinct in the dim confusion—masses of green light that might be islands with their lovely trees; but suddenly tipt with fire shone out the golden pinnacles of the Eagle's Nest; and as again they were tamed by cloud-shadow, the glow of Purple Mountain for a while enchained our vision, and then left it free to feast on the forests of Glena, till, wandering at the capricious will of fancy, it floated in delight over the woods of Mucruss, and long lost among the trembling imagery of the water, found lasting repose on the steadfast beauty of the silvan isle of Inisfallen.

But now for the black mass of rapid waters that, murmuring from loch to river, rush roaring through that rainbow-arch, and bathe the green woods in freshening spray-mist through a loveliest landscape, that steals along with its meadow-sprinkling trees close to the very shore of Loch-Etive, binding the two lochs together with a silvan band—her whose calmer spirit never knows the ebb or flow of tide, and her who fluctuates even when the skies are still with the swelling and subsiding tumult duly sent up into and recalled

down from the silence of her inland solitude. And now for one pool in that river, called by eminence the Salmon Pool, whose gravelly depths are sometimes paved with the blue backs of the silver-scaled shiners, all strong as sunbeams, for a while reposing there, till the river shall blacken in its glee to the floods falling in Glen-Scrae and Glenorchy, and then will they shoot through the cataract—for 'tis all one fall between the lochs—passionate of the sweet fresh waters in which the Abbey-Isle reflects her one ruined tower, or Kilchurn, at all times dim or dark in the shadow of Cruachan, see his grim turrets, momentarily less grim, imaged in the tremblings of the casual sunshine. Sometimes they lie like stones, nor, unless you stir them up with a long pole, will they stir in the gleam, more than if they were shadows breathed from trees when all winds are dead. But at other times, they are on feed; and then no sooner does the fly drop on the water in its blue and yellow gaudiness, (and oh! but the brown mallard wing is bloody—bloody!) than some snout sucks it in—some snout of some swine-necked shoulder-bender; and instantly—as by dexterously dropping your elbow you give him the butt, and strike the barb through his tongue—down the long reach of the river vista'd along that straight oak-avenue—but with clear space of greensward between wood and water—shoots the giant steel-stung in his fear, bounding blue-white into the air, and then down into the liquid element with a plunge as of a man, or rather a horse, till your

heart leaps to your mouth, or, as the Greeks we believe used to say, to your nose, and you are seen galloping along the banks, by spectators in search of the picturesque, and ignorant of angling, supposed in the act of making your escape, with an incomprehensible weapon in both hands, from some rural madhouse.

Eh? eh? not in our hat—not in our waistcoat—not in our jacket—not in our breeches! By the ghost of Autolycus some pickpocket, while we were moralizing, has abstracted our Lascelles! We may as well tie a stone to each of our feet, and sink away from all sense of misery in the Salmon Pool. Oh! that it had been our purse! Who cares for a dozen dirty sovereigns and a score of nasty notes? And what's the use of them to us now, or indeed at any time? And what's the use of this identical rod? Hang it, if a little thing would not make us break it! A multiplying reel indeed! The invention of a fool. The Tent sees not us again; this afternoon we shall return to Edinburgh. Don't talk to us of flies at the next village. There are no flies at the village—there is no village. O Beelzebub! O Satan! was ever man tempted as we are tempted? See—see a Fish—a fine Fish—an enormous Fish—leaping to insult us! Give us our gun that we may shoot him—no—no, dang guns—and dang this great clumsy rod! There—let it lie there for the first person that passes—for we swear never to angle more. As for the Awe we never liked it—and wonder what infatuation brought us here. We shall be made to pay for this yet—whew! there

was a twinge—that big toe of ours we'll warrant is as red as fire, and we bitterly confess that we deserve the gout. Och! och! och!

But hark! whoop and hollo, and is that too the music of the hunter's horn? Reverberating among the woods a well-known voice salutes our ear; and there! bounds Hamish over the rocks like a chamois taking his pastime. Holding up our LASCELLES! he places it with a few respectful words—hoping we have not missed it—and standing aloof—leaves us to our own reflections and our flies. Nor do those amount to remorse—nor these to more than a few dozens. Samson's strength having been restored—we speak of our rod, mind ye, not of ourselves—we lift up our downcast eyes, and steal somewhat ashamed a furtive glance at the trees and stones that must have overheard and overseen all our behaviour. We leave those who have been in any thing like the same predicament to confess—not publicly—there is no occasion for that—nor on their knees—but to their own consciences, if they have any, their grief and their joy, their guilt, and we hope, their gratitude. Transported though they were beyond all bounds, we forgive them; for even those great masters of wisdom, the Stoics, were not infallible, nor were they always able to sustain, at their utmost strength, in practice the principles of their philosophy.

We are in a bloody mood, and shall not leave this Pool—without twenty mortal murders on our head. Jump away, TROUTS—without any bowels of compassion for the race of flies. Devouring Ephemerals! Can you

not suffer the poor insects to sport out their day? They must be insipid eating; but here are some savoury exceedingly—it is needless to mention their name—that carry *sauce piquante* in their tails. Do try the taste of this bobber—but any one of the three you please. There! hold fast KIRBY—for that is a Whopper. A Mort! we did not suppose there were any in the river. Why, he springs as if he were a Fish? Go it again, Beauty. We ourselves could jump a bit in our day—nearly four times our own length—but we never could clear our own height, nor within half-a-foot of it; while you—our Hearty—though not two feet long, certainly do the perpendicular to the tune of four—from tail-fin to water-surface—your snout being six nearer the sky than the foam-bells you break in your descent into your native element. Cayenne, mustard, and ketchup is our zest, and we shall assuredly eat you at sunset. Do you know the name of the Fool at the other end—according to Dr Johnson? CHRISTOPHER NORTH. 'Tis an honour to be captured by the Old Knight of the Bloody Hand. You deserve to die such a death—for you keep in the middle of the current like a mort of mettle, and are not one of the skulkers that seek the side, and would fain take to the bush in hopes of prolonging life by foul entanglement. Bravely bored, Gil Morrice. There is as great difference in the moral qualities of the finny tribe as among us humans—and we have known some cowardly wretches escape our clutches by madly floundering in among floating weeds, or diving down among

labyrinths of stone at the bottom, in paroxysms of fear that no tackle could withstand, not even Mackenzie's. He has broke his heart. Feeble as the dying gladiator, the arena swims around him, and he around the arena—till sailing with snout shore-ward, at sea in his own pool, he absolutely rolls in convulsions in between our very feet, and we, unprepared for such a mode of procedure, hastily retreating, discover that our joints are not so supple as of yore, and *play cloit* on our back among the gowans. O'Bronte tooths him by the cerebellum, and carries him up-brae in his mouth like a mawkin. About six pounds.

Had we killed such a mort as is now in Magog, fifty years ago, we should not have rested a single instant after basketing him, before re-rushing, with a sanguinary aspect, to the work of death. Now carelessly diffused, we lie on our elbow, with our mild cheek on our palm, and keep gazing—but not lack-a-daisically—on the circumambient woods. Yes! circumambient—for look where we will, they accompany our ken like a peristrephic panorama. If men have been seen walking like trees, why may not trees be seen walking like men—in battalia—in armies—but oh! how peaceful the array; and as the slow silvan swimming away before our eyes subsides and settles, in that steadfast variegation of colouring, what a depth of beauty and grandeur, of joy and peace!

Phin! this Rod is thy masterpiece. And what Gut! *There she has it!* Reel-music for ever! Ten fathom are run out already—and see how she shoots, Hamish;

—such a somerset as that was never thrown from a spring-board. Just the size for strength and agility—twenty pound to an ounce—jimp weight, Hamish—ha! Harlequin art thou—or Columbine? Assuredly neither Clown nor Pantaloon. Now we have turned her ladyship's nose up the stream, her lungs, if she have any, must be beginning to labour, and we almost hear her snore. What! in the sulks already—sullen among the stones. But we shall make you mudge, madam, were we to tear the very tongue out of your mouth. Aye, once more down the middle to the tune of that spirited country-dance—"Off she goes!" Set corners, and reel! The gaff, Hamish—the gaff! and the landing-net! For here is a shallow of the silver sand, spreading into the bay of a ford—and ere she recovers from her astonishment, here will we land her—with a strong pull, a long pull, and a pull altogether—just on the edge of the greensward—and then smite her on the shoulder, Hamish—and, to make assurance doubly sure, the net under her tail, and hoist her aloft in the sunshine, a glorious prize, dazzling the daylight, and giving a brighter verdure to the woods.

He who takes two hours to kill a fish—be its bulk what it may—is no man, and is not worth his meat, nor the vital air. The proportion is a minute to the pound. This rule were we taught by the "Best at Most" among British sportsmen—Scrope the Matchless on moor, mountain, river, loch, or sea; and, with exquisite nicety, have we now carried it into practice. Away with your useless steelyards. Let us feel her teeth with our fore-

finger, and then held out at arm's length—so—we know by feeling, that she is, as we said soon as we saw her side, a twenty-pounder to a drachm, and we have been true to time, within two seconds. She has literally no head; but her snout is in her shoulders. That is the beauty of a fish—high and round shoulders, short waisted, no loins, but all body, and not long of terminating—the shorter still the better—in a tail sharp and pointed as Diana's, when she is crescent in the sky.

And lo, and behold! there is Diana—but not crescent—for round and broad is she as the sun himself—shining in the south, with as yet a needless light—for daylight has not gone down in the west—and we can hardly call it gloaming. Chaste and cold though she seem, a nunlike luminary who has just taken the veil—a transparent veil of fine fleecy clouds—yet, alas! is she frail as of old, when she descended on the top of Lafmos, to hold dalliance with Endymion. She has absolutely the appearance of being in the family way—and not far from her time. Lo! two of her children stealing from ether towards her feet. One on her right hand, and another on her left—the fairest daughters that ever charmed mother's heart—and in heaven called stars. What a celestial trio the three form in the sky! The face of the moon keeps brightening as the lesser two twinkle into larger lustre; and now, though Day is still lingering, we feel that it is Night. When the one comes and when the other goes, what eye can note, what tongue can tell—but what heart feels not in the dewy hush divine, as the power of the beauty of earth

decays over us, and a still dream descends upon us in the power of the beauty of heaven!

But hark! the regular twang and dip of oars coming up the river—and lo! indistinct in the distance, something moving through the moonshine—and now taking the likeness of a boat—a barge—with bonneted heads leaning back at every flashing stroke—and, Hamish, list! a choral song in thine own dear native tongue! Sent hither by the Queen of the sea-fairies to bear back in state Christopher North to the Tent? No. 'Tis the big coble belonging to the tacksman of the Awe—and the crew are going to pull her through the first few hours of the night—along with the flowing tide—up to Kinloch-Etive, to try a cast with their long net at the mouth of the river, now winding dim like a snake from King's House beneath the Black Mount, and along the bays at the head of the Loch. A rumour that we were on the river had reached them—and see an awning of tartan over the stern, beneath which, as we sit, the sun may not smite our head by day, nor the moon by night. We embark—and descending the river like a dream, rapidly but stilly, and kept in the middle of the current by cunning helmsman, without aid of idle oar, all six suspended, we drop along through the silvan scenery, gliding serenely away back into the mountain-gloom, and enter into the wider moonshine trembling on the wavy verdure of the foam-crested sea. May this be Loch-Etive? Yea—verily; but so broad here is its bosom, and so far spreads the billowy brightness, that we might almost believe that our bark was bounding

over the ocean, and marching merrily on the main. Are we—into such a dream might fancy for a moment half beguile herself—rowing back, after a day among the savage islanders, to our ship lying at anchor in the offing, on a voyage of discovery round the world?

Where are all the dogs? Ponto, Piro, Basta, trembling partly with cold, partly with hunger, partly with fatigue, and partly with fear, among and below the seats of the rowers—with their noses somewhat uncomfortably laid between their fore-paws on the tarry timbers; but O'Bronte boldly sitting at our side, and wistfully eyeing the green swell as it heaves beautifully by, ready at the slightest signal to leap overboard, and wallow like a walrus in the brine, of which you might almost think he was born and bred, so native seems the element to the "Dowg o' Dowgs." Ay, these are seamews, O'Bronte, wheeling white as silver in the moonshine; but we *shall* not shoot them—no—no—no—we *will* not shoot you, ye images of playful peace, so fearlessly, nay, so lovingly attending our bark as it bounds over the breasts of the billows, in motion quick almost as your slowest flight, while ye linger around, and behind, and before our path, like fair spirits wiling us along up this great Loch, farther and farther through gloom and glimmer, into the heart of profounder solitude. On what errands of your own are ye winnowing your way, stooping ever and anon just to dip your wing-tips in the waves, and then up into the open air—the blue light filling this magnificent hollow—or seen

glancing along the shadows of the mountains as they divide the Loch into a succession of separate bays, and often seem to block it up, till another moonlight reach is seen extending far beyond, and carries the imagination on—on—on—into inland recesses that seem to lose at last all connexion with the forgotten sea. All at once the moon is like a ghost;—and we believe—Heaven knows why—in the authenticity of Ossian's Poems.

Was there ever such a man as Ossian? We devoutly hope there was—for if so, then there were a prodigious number of fine fellows, besides his Bardship, who after their death figured away as their glimmering ghosts, with noble effect, among the moonlight mists of the mountains. The poetry of Ossian has, it is true, since the days of Macpherson, in no way coloured the poetry of the island; and Mr Wordsworth, who has written beautiful lines about the old Phantom, states that fact as an argument against its authenticity. He thinks Ossian as we now possess him, no poet; and alleges, that if these compositions had been the good things so many people have thought them, they would, in some way or other, have breathed their spirit over the poetical genius of the land. Who knows that they may not do so yet? The time may not have come. But must all true poetry necessarily create imitation, and a school of imitators? One sees no reason why it must. Besides, the life which the poetry of Ossian celebrates, has utterly passed away; and the poetry itself, good, bad, or indifferent, is so very peculiar, that to imitate it at all, you must almost tran-

scribe it. That, for a good many years, was often done, but naturally inspired any other feeling than delight or admiration. But the simple question is, Do the poems of Ossian delight greatly and widely? We think they do. Nor can we believe that they would not still delight such a poet as Mr Wordsworth. What dreariness overspreads them all! What a melancholy spirit shrouds all his heroes, passing before us on the cloud, after all their battles have been fought, and their tombs raised on the hill! The very picture of the old blind Hero-bard himself, often attended by the weeping virgins whom war has made desolate, is always touching, often sublime. The desert is peopled with lamenting mortals, and the mists that wrap them with ghosts, whose remembrances of this life are all dirge and elegy. True, that the images are few and endlessly reiterated; but that, we suspect, is the case with all poetry composed not in a philosophic age. The great and constant appearances of nature suffice, in their simplicity, for all its purposes. The poet seeks not to vary their character, and his hearers are willing to be charmed over and over again by the same strains. We believe that the poetry of Ossian would be destroyed by any greater distinctness or variety of imagery. And if, indeed, Fingal lived and Ossian sung, we must believe that the old bard was blind; and we suspect that in such an age, such a man would, in his blindness, think dreamily indeed of the torrents, and lakes, and heaths, and clouds, and mountains, moons and stars, which he had leapt, swam, walked, climbed, and gazed on in the

days of his rejoicing youth. Then has he no tenderness—no pathos—no beauty? Alas for thousands of hearts and souls if it be even so! For then are many of their holiest dreams worthless all, and divinest melancholy a mere complaint of the understanding, which a bit of philosophical criticism will purge away, as the leech's phial does a disease of the blood.

Macpherson's Ossian, is it not poetry? Wordsworth says it is not—but Christopher North says it is—with all reverence for the King. Let its antiquity be given up—let such a state of society as is therein described be declared impossible—let all the inconsistencies and violations of nature ever charged against it be acknowledged—let all its glaring plagiarisms from poetry of modern date inspire what derision they may—and far worse the perpetual repetition of its own imbecilities and inanities, wearying one down even to disgust and anger;—yet, in spite of all, are we not made to feel, not only that we are among the mountains, but to forget that there is any other world in existence, save that which glooms and glimmers, and wails and raves around us in mists and clouds, and storms and snows—full of lakes and rivers, sea-intersected and sea-surrounded, with a sky as troublous as the earth—yet both at times visited with a mournful beauty that sinks strangely into the soul—while the shadowy life depictured there eludes not our human sympathies; nor yet, aerial though they be—so sweet and sad are their voices—do there float by as unbeloved, unpitied, or unhonoured—single, or in bands—

the ghosts of the brave and beautiful; when the few stars are dim, and the moon is felt, not seen, to be yielding what faint light there may be in the skies.

The boat in a moment is a bagpipe; and not only so, but all the mountains are bagpipes, and so are the clouds. All the bagpipes in the world are here, and they fill heaven and earth. 'Tis no exaggeration—much less a fiction—but the soul and body of truth. There Hamish stands stately at the prow; and as the boat hangs by midships on the very point that commands all the echoes, he fills the whole night with the "Campbells are coming," till the sky yells with the gathering as of all the Clans. His eyes are triumphantly fixed on ours to catch their emotions; his fingers cease their twinkling; and still that wild gathering keeps playing of itself among the mountains—fainter and fainter, as it is flung from cliff to cliff, till it dies away far—far off—as if in infinitude—sweet even and soft in its evanescence as some lover's lute.

We are now in the bay of Gleno. For though moonlight strangely alters the whole face of nature, confusing its most settled features, and with a gentle glamoury blending with the greensward what once was the grey granite, and investing with apparent woodiness what an hour ago was the desolation of herbless cliffs—yet not all the changes that wondrous nature, in ceaseless ebb and flow, ever wrought on her works, could metamorphose out of our recognition that Glen, in which, one night—long—long ago—

"In life's morning march, when our spirit was young!"

we were visited by a dream—a dream that shadowed forth in its inexplicable symbols the whole course of our future life—the graves—the tombs where many we loved are now buried—that churchyard, where we hope and believe that one day our own bones will rest.

But who shouts from the shore, Hamish—and now, as if through his fingers, sends forth a sharp shrill whistle that pierces the sky? Ah, ha! we ken his shadow in the light, with the roe on his shoulder. 'Tis the schoolmaster of Gleno, bringing down our quarry to the boat—kilted, we declare, like a true Son of the Mist. The shore here is shelving but stony, and our prow is aground. But strong-spined and loined, and strong in their withers, are the M'Dougals of Lorn; and, wading up to the red hairy knees, he has flung the roe into the boat, and followed it himself like a deer-hound. So bend to your oars, my hearties—my heroes—the wind freshens, and the tide strengthens from the sea; and at eight knots an hour we shall sweep along the shadows, and soon see the lantern, twinkling as from a lighthouse, on the pole of our Tent.

In a boat, upon a great sea-arm, at night, among mountains, who would be so senseless, so soulless as to speak? The hour has its might,

> "Because not of this noisy world, but silent and divine!"

A sound there is in the sea-green swell, and the hollows of the rocks, that keep muttering and muttering, as their entrances feel the touch of the tide. But nothing beneath the moon can be more solemn, now that her

aspect is so wan, and that some melancholy spirit has obscured the lustre of the stars. We feel as if the breath of old elegiac poetry were visiting our slumber. All is sad within us, yet why we know not; and the sadness is stranger as it is deeper after a day of almost foolish pastime, spent by a being who believes that he is immortal, and that this life is but the threshold of a life to come. Poor, puny, and paltry pastimes indeed are they all! But are they more so than those pursuits of which the moral poet has sung,

"The paths of glory lead but to the grave!"

Methinks, now, as we are entering into a sabler mass of shadow, that the doctrine of eternal punishment of sins committed in time—but—

"Here's a health to all good lasses,
Here's a health to all good lasses,
Pledge it merrily, fill your glasses;
Let the bumper toast go round,
Let the bumper toast go round!"

Rest on your oars, lads. Hamish! the quech! give each man a caulker, that his oar may send a bolder twang from its rollock, and our fish-coble walk the waves like a man-of-war's gig, with the captain on board, going ashore, after a long cruise, to meet his wife. Now she spins! and lo! lights at Kinloch-Etive, and beyond on the breast of the mountain, bright as Hesperus—the Pole-star of our Tent!

Well, this is indeed the Londe of Faery! A car with a nag caparisoned at the water edge! On with the roe,

and in with Christopher and the Fish. Now, Hamish, hand us the Crutch. After a cast or two, which, may they be successful as the night is auspicious, your presence, gentlemen, will be expected in the Tent. Now, Hamish, handle thou the ribbons—alias the hair-tether —and we will touch him behind, should he linger, with a weapon that might

"Create a soul under the ribs of death."

Linger! why the lightning flies from his heels, as he carries us along a fine natural causeway, like Ossian's car-borne heroes. From the size and state of the stones over which we make such a clatter, we shrewdly suspect that the parliamentary grant for destroying the old Highland torrent-roads has not extended its ravages to Glen-Etive. O'Bronte,

"Like panting Time, toils after us in vain;"

and the pointers are following us by our own scent, and that of the roe, in the distant darkness. Pull up, Hamish, pull up, or otherwise we shall overshoot our mark, and meet with some accident or other, perhaps a capsize on Bachaille-Etive, or the Black Mount. We had no idea the circle of greensward in front of the Tent was so spacious. Why, there is room for the Lord Mayor of London's state-coach to turn with its eight horses, and that enormous ass, Parson Dillon, on the dickey. What could have made us think at this moment of London? Certes, the association of ideas is a droll thing, and also sometimes most magnificent. Dancing

in the Tent, among strange figures! Celebration of the nuptials of some Arab chief, in an oasis in the Great Desert of Stony Arabia! Heavens! look at Tickler! How he hauls the Hizzies! There is no time to be lost—he and the Admiral must not have all the sport to themselves; and, by and by, spite of age and infirmity, we shall show the Tent a touch of the Highland Fling. Hollo! you landloupers! Christopher is upon you—behold the Tenth Avatar incarnated in North.

But what Apparitions at the Tent-door salute our approach?

> "Back step these two fair angels, half afraid
> So suddenly to see the Griesly King!"

Goat-herdesses from the cliffs of Clencreran or Glenco, kilted to the knee, and not unconscious of their ankles, one twinkle of which is sufficient to bid "Begone dull care" for ever. One hand on a shoulder of each of the mountain-nymphs—sweet liberties—and then embraced by both, half in their arms, and half on their bosoms, was ever Old Man so pleasantly let down from triumphal car, on the soft surface of his mother-earth? Ay, there lies the Red-deer! and what heaps of smaller slain! But was there ever such a rush of dogs! We shall be extinguished. Down, dogs, down—nay, ladies and gentlemen, be seated—on one another's knees as before—we beseech you—we are but men like yourselves—and

> "Without the smile from partial beauty won,
> Oh! what were man?—a world without a sun!"

What it is to be the darling of gods and men, and women and children! Why, the very stars burn brighter —and thou, O Moon! art like the Sun. We foresee a night of dancing and drinking—till the mountain-dew melt in the lustre of morn. Such a day should have a glorious death—and a glorious resurrection. Hurra! Hurra!

THE MOORS FOR EVER! THE MOORS! THE MOORS!

HIGHLAND SNOW STORM.

WHAT do you mean by original genius? By that fine line in the Pleasures of Hope—

"To muse on Nature with a poet's eye?"

Why—genius—one kind of it at least—is transfusion of self into all outward things. The genius that does that—naturally, but novelly—is original; and now you know the meaning of one kind of original genius. Have we, then, Christopher North, that gift? Have you? Yea, both of Us. Our spirits animate the insensate earth, till she speaks, sings, smiles, laughs, weeps, sighs, groans, goes mad, and dies. Nothing easier, though perhaps it is wicked, than for original genius like ours, or yours, to drive the earth to distraction. We wave our wizard hand thus—and lo! list! she is insane. How she howls to heaven, and how the maddened heaven howls back her frenzy! Two dreadful maniacs raging apart, but in communion, in one vast bedlam! The drift-snow spins before the hurricane, hissing like a nest of serpents

let loose to torment the air. What fierce flakes! furies! as if all the wasps that ever stung had been revivified, and were now careering part and parcel of the tempest. We are in a Highland Hut in the midst of mountains. But no land is to be seen any more than if we were in the middle of the sea. Yet a wan glare shows that the snow-storm is strangely shadowed by superincumbent cliffs; and though you cannot see, you *hear* the mountains. Rendings are going on, frequent, over your head —and all around the blind wilderness—the thunderous tumblings down of avalanches, mixed with the moanings, shriekings, and yellings of caves, as if spirits there were angry with the snow-drift choking up the fissures and chasms in the cliffs. Is that the creaking and groaning, and rocking and tossing of old trees, afraid of being uprooted and flung into the spate?

> "Red comes the river down, and loud and oft
> The angry spirit of the water shrieks,"

more fearful than at midnight in this nightlike day—whose meridian is a total sun eclipse. The river runs by, bloodlike, through the snow—and, short as is the reach you can see through the flaky gloom, that short reach shows that all his course must be terrible—more and more terrible—as, gathering his streams like a chieftain his clan—erelong he will sweep shieling, and hut, and hamlet to the sea, undermining rocks, cutting mounds asunder, and blowing up bridges that explode into the air with a roar like that of cannon. You sometimes think you hear thunder, though you know that

cannot be—but sublimer than thunder is the nameless noise so like that of agonized life—that eddies far and wide around—high and huge above—fear all the while being at the bottom of your heart—an objectless, dim, dreary, undefinable fear, whose troubled presence—if any mortal feeling be so—is sublime. Your imagination is troubled, and dreams of death, but of no single corpse, of no single grave. Nor fear you for yourself—for the Hut in which you thus enjoy the storm, is safer than the canopied cliff-calm of the eagle's nest; but your spirit is convulsed from its deepest and darkest foundations, and all that lay hidden there of the wild and wonderful, the pitiful and the strange, the terrible and pathetic, is now upturned in dim confusion, and imagination, working among the hoarded gatherings of the heart, creates out of them moods kindred and congenial with the hurricane, intensifying the madness of the heaven and the earth, till that which sees and that which is seen, that which hears and that which is heard, undergo alternate mutual transfiguration; and the blind Roaring Day—at once substance, shadow, and soul—is felt to be one with ourselves—the blended whole either the Live-Dead, or the Dead-Alive.

We are in a Highland Hut—if we called it a Shieling we did so merely because we love the sound of the word Shieling, and the image it at once brings to eye and ear—the rustling of leaves on a summer silvan bower, by simple art slightly changed from the form of the growth of nature, or the waving of fern on the turf-roof and

turf-walls, all covered with wild-flowers and mosses, and moulded by one single season into a knoll-like beauty, beside its guardian birch-tree, insupportable to all evil spirits, but with its silvery stem and drooping tresses dear to the Silent People that won in the land of peace. Truly this is not the sweet Shieling-season, when, far away from all other human dwellings, on the dip of some great mountain, quite at the head of a day's-journey-long glen, the young herdsman, haply all alone, without one single being with him that has the use of speech, liveth for months retired far from kirk and cross—Luath his sole companion—his sole care the pasturing herds—the sole sounds he hears the croak of the raven on the cliff, or bark of the eagle in the sky. O sweet, solitary lot of lover! Haply in some oasis in the wilderness, some steadfast gleam of emerald light amid the hyacinthine-hue of the heather, that young herdsman hath pitched his tent, by one Good Spirit haunted morning, noon, and night, through the sunny, moonlight, starry months,—the Orphan-girl, whom years ago her dying father gave into his arms—the old blind soldier—knowing that the boy would shield her innocence when every blood-relation had been buried—now Orphan-girl no more, but growing there like a lily at the Shieling door, or singing within sweetlier than any bird—the happiest of all living things—her own Ronald's dark-haired Bride.

We are in a Highland Hut among a Highland Snow-storm—and all at once amidst the roar of the merciless hurricane we remember the words of Burns—the peer-

less Peasant. Simple as they are, with what profound pathos are they charged!

"List'ning the doors an' winnocks rattle;
I think me on the ourie cattle,
Or silly sheep, wha bide this brattle
O' winter war,
And thro' the drift, deep-lairing sprattle,
Beneath a scaur!

"Ilk happing bird, wee, helpless thing,
That, in the merry months o' spring,
Delighted me to hear thee sing,
What comes o' thee?
Whar wilt thou cow'r thy chittering wing,
An' close thy e'e?

"Ev'n you on murdering errands toil'd,
Lone from your savage homes exiled,
The blood-stain'd roost, and sheep-cot spoil'd,
My heart forgets,
While pitiless the tempest wild
Sore on you beats."

Burns is our Lowland bard—but poetry is poetry all over the world, when streamed from the life-blood of the human heart. So sang the Genius of inspired humanity in his bleak "auld clay-biggin," on one of the braes of Coila, and now our heart responds the strain, high up among the Celtic cliffs, central among a sea of mountains hidden in a snow-storm that enshrouds the day. Ay—the one single door of this Hut—the one single "winnock," does "rattle"—by fits—as the blast smites it, in spite of the white mound drifted hill-high all round the buried dwelling. Dim through the peat-reek cower the figures in tartan—fear has hushed the cry of the infant in the swinging cradle—and

all the other imps are mute. But the household is thinner than usual at the meal-hour; and feet that loved to follow the red-deer along the bent, now fearless of pitfalls, since the first lour of morning light have been traversing the tempest. The shepherds, who sit all day long when summer hues are shining, and summer flowerets are blowing, almost idle in their plaids, beneath the shadow of some rock watching their flocks feeding above, around, and below, now expose their bold breasts to all the perils of the pastoral life. This is our Arcadia—a realm of wrath—woe—danger, and death. Here are bred the men whose blood—when the bagpipe blows—is prodigally poured forth on a thousand shores. The limbs strung to giant-force by such snows as these, moving in line of battle within the shadow of the Pyramids,

> "Brought from the dust the sound of liberty,"

while the Invincible standard was lowered before the heroes of the Old Black Watch, and victory out of the very heart of defeat arose on "that thrice-repeated cry" that quails all foes that madly rush against the banners of Albyn. The storm that has frozen in his eyry the eagle's wing, driven the deer to the comb beneath the cliffs, and all night imprisoned the wild-cat in his cell, hand in hand as is their wont when crossing a stream or flood, bands of Highlanders now face in its strongholds all over the ranges of mountains, come it from the wrathful inland or the more wrathful sea.

> "They think upon the ourie cattle
> And silly sheep,"

and man's reason goes to the help of brute instinct.

How passing sweet is that other stanza, heard like a low hymn amidst the noise of the tempest! Let our hearts once more recite it—

> " Ilk happing bird, wee, helpless thing,
> That, in the merry months o' spring,
> Delighted me to hear thee sing,
> What comes o' thee?
> Whar wilt thou cow'r thy chittering wing,
> An' close thy e'e?"

The whole earth is for a moment green again—trees whisper—streamlets murmur—and the " merry month o' Spring" is musical through all her groves. But in another moment we know that almost all those sweet-singers are now dead—or that they " cow'r the chittering wing"—never more to flutter through the woodlands, and " close the e'e" that shall never more be reillumined with love, when the Season of Nests is at hand, and bush, tree, and tower are again all a-twitter with the survivors of some gentler climate.

The poet's heart, humanized to utmost tenderness by the beauty of its own merciful thoughts, extends its pity to the poor beasts of prey. Each syllable tells—each stroke of the poet-painter's pencil depicts the life and sufferings of the wretched creatures. And then, feeling that at such an hour all life is subject to one lot, how profound the pathos reflected back upon our own selves and our mortal condition, by these few simplest words—

> " My heart forgets,
> While pitiless the tempest wild
> Sore on you beats!"

They go to help the "ourie cattle" and the "silly sheep;" but who knows that they are not *sent* on an errand of higher mercy, by Him whose ear has not been shut to the prayer almost frozen on the lips of them about to perish!—an incident long forgotten, though on the eve of that day on which the deliverance happened, so passionately did we all regard it, that we felt that interference providential—as if we had indeed seen the hand of God stretched down through the mist and snow from heaven. We all said that it would never leave our memory; yet all of us soon forgot it—but now, while the tempest howls, it seems again of yesterday.

One family lived in Glencreran, and another in Glenco—the families of two brothers—seldom visiting each other on working-days—seldom meeting even on Sabbaths, for theirs was not the same parish-kirk—seldom coming together on rural festivals or holydays, for in the Highlands now these are not so frequent as of yore; yet all these sweet seldoms, taken together, to loving hearts made a happy many, and thus, though each family passed its life in its own home, there were many invisible threads stretched out through the intermediate air, connecting the two dwellings together—as the gossamer keeps floating from one tree to another, each with its own secret nest. And nestlike both dwellings were. *That* in Glenco, built beneath a treeless but high-heathered rock—lown in all storms—with greensward and garden on a slope down to a rivulet, the clearest of the clear (oh! once wofully

reddened !) and *growing*—so it seems in the mosses of its own roof, and the huge stones that overshadow it—out of the earth. *That* in Glencreran, more conspicuous, on a knoll among the pastoral meadows, midway between mountain and mountain, so that the grove which shelters it, except when the sun is shining high, is darkened by their meeting shadows, and dark indeed even in the sunshine, for 'tis a low but wide-armed grove of old oaklike pines. A little further down, and Glencreran is very silvan; but this dwelling is the highest up of all, the first you descend upon, near the foot of that wild hanging staircase between you and Glen-Etive; and, except this old oaklike grove of pines, there is not a tree, and hardly a bush, on bank or brae, pasture or hay-field, though these are kept by many a rill there mingling themselves into one stream, in a perpetual lustre, that seems to be as native to the grass as its light is to the glow-worm. Such are the two Huts—for they are huts and no more—and you may see them still, if you know how to discover the beautiful sights of nature from descriptions treasured in your heart—and if the spirit of change, now nowhere at rest on the earth, not even in its most solitary places, have not swept from the scenes they beautified the humble but hereditary dwellings that ought to be allowed, in the fulness of the quiet time, to relapse back into the bosom of nature, through insensible and unperceived decay.

These Huts belonged to brothers—and each had an only child—a son and a daughter—born on the same

day—and now blooming on the verge of youth. A year ago, and they were but mere children—but what wondrous growth of frame and spirit does nature at that season of life often present before our eyes! So that we almost see the very change going on between morn and morn, and feel that these objects of our affection are daily brought closer to ourselves, by partaking daily more and more in all our most sacred thoughts, in our cares and in our duties, and in knowledge of the sorrows as well as the joys of our common lot. Thus had these cousins grown up before their parents' eyes, Flora Macdonald—a name hallowed of yore—the fairest, and Ranald Cameron, the boldest of all the living flowers in Glenco and Glencreran. It was now their seventeenth birthday, and never had a winter sun smiled more serenely over a hush of snow. Flora, it had been agreed on, was to pass that day in Glencreran, and Ranald to meet her among the mountains, that he might bring her down the many precipitous passes to his parents' hut. It was the middle of February, and the snow had lain for weeks with all its drifts unchanged, so calm had been the weather, and so continued the frost. At the same hour, known by horologe on the cliff touched by the finger of dawn, the happy creatures left each their own glen, and mile after mile of the smooth surface glided away past their feet, almost as the quiet water glides by the little boat that in favouring breezes walks merrily along the sea. And soon they met at the trysting-place—a bank of birch-trees beneath a cliff that takes its name from the Eagles.

On their meeting seemed not to them the whole of nature suddenly inspired with joy and beauty? Insects unheard by them before, hummed and glittered in the air—from tree-roots, where the snow was thin, little flowers, or herbs flowerlike, now for the first time were seen looking out as if alive—the trees themselves seemed budding as if it were already spring—and rare as in that rocky region are the birds of song, a faint trill for a moment touched their ears, and the flutter of a wing, telling them that somewhere near there was preparation for a nest. Deep down beneath the snow they listened to the tinkle of rills unreached by the frost—and merry, thought they, was the music of these contented prisoners. Not Summer's self, in its deepest green, so beautiful had ever been to them before, as now the mild white of Winter; and as their eyes were lifted up to heaven, when had they ever seen before a sky of such perfect blue, a sun so gentle in its brightness, or altogether a week-day in any season, so like a Sabbath in its stillness, so like a holyday in its joy! Lovers were they—although as yet they scarcely knew it; for from love only could have come such bliss as now was theirs, a bliss that while it beautified was felt to come from the skies.

Flora sang to Ranald many of her old songs to those wild Gaelic airs that sound like the sighing of winds among fractured cliffs, or the branches of storm-tossed trees when the subsiding tempest is about to let them rest. Monotonous music! but irresistible over the heart it has once awakened and enthralled, so sin-

cere seems to be the mournfulness it breathes—a mournfulness brooding and feeding on the same note that is at once its natural expression and its sweetest aliment—of which the singer never wearieth in her dream, while her heart all the time is haunted by all that is most piteous, by the faces of the dead in their paleness returning to the shades of life, only that once more they may pour from their fixed eyes those strange showers of unaccountable tears!

How merry were they between those mournful airs! How Flora trembled to see her lover's burning brow and flashing eyes, as he told her tales of great battles fought in foreign lands, far across the sea—tales which he had drunk in with greedy ears from the old heroes scattered all over Lochaber and Badenoch, on the brink of the grave still garrulous of blood!

"The sun sat high in his meridian tower,"

but time had not been with the youthful lovers, and the blessed beings believed that 'twas but a little hour since beneath the Eagle Cliff they had met in the prime of the morn!

The boy starts to his feet—and his keen eye looks along the ready rifle—for his sires had all been famous deer-stalkers, and the passion of the chase was hereditary in his blood. Lo! a deer from Dalness, hound-driven or sullenly astray, slowly bearing his antlers up the glen, then stopping for a moment to snuff the air, and then away—away! The rifle-shot rings dully from the scarce echoing snow-cliffs, and the animal leaps aloft, struck by a certain but not sudden death-wound. Oh!

for Fingal now to pull him down like a wolf! But labouring and lumbering heavily along, the snow spotted as he bounds with blood, the huge animal at last disappears round some rocks at the head of the glen. "Follow me, Flora!" the boy-hunter cries—and flinging down their plaids, they turn their bright faces to the mountain, and away up the long glen after the stricken deer. Fleet was the mountain-girl—and Ranald, as he ever and anon looked back to wave her on, with pride admired her lightsome motion as she bounded along the snow. Redder and redder grew that snow, and more heavily trampled, as they winded round the rocks. Yonder is the deer staggering up the mountain, not half a mile off—now standing at bay, as if before his swimming eyes came Fingal, the terror of the forest, whose howl was known to all the echoes, and quailed the herd while their antlers were yet afar off. "Rest, Flora! rest! while I fly to him with my rifle—and shoot him through the heart!"

Up—up—up the interminable glen, that kept winding and winding round many a jutting promontory, and many a castellated cliff, the red-deer kept dragging his gore-oozing bulk, sometimes almost within, and then, for some hundreds of yards, just beyond rifle-shot; while the boy, maddened by the chase, pressed forwards, now all alone, nor any more looking behind for Flora, who had entirely disappeared; and thus he was hurried on for miles by the whirlwind of passion—till at last he struck the noble quarry, and down sank the antlers in the snow, while the air was

spurned by the convulsive beatings of feet. Then leaped Ranald upon the Red-deer like a beast of prey, and lifted up a look of triumph to the mountain-tops.

Where is Flora? Her lover has forgotten her—and he is alone—nor knows it—he and the Red-deer—an enormous animal—fast stiffening in the frost of death.

Some large flakes of snow are in the air, and they seem to waver and whirl, though an hour ago there was not a breath. Faster they fall and faster—the flakes are almost as large as leaves—and overhead whence so suddenly has come that huge yellow cloud? "Flora, where are you? where are you, Flora?" and from the huge hide the boy leaps up, and sees that no Flora is at hand. But yonder is a moving speck far off upon the snow! 'Tis she—'tis she—and again Ranald turns his eyes upon the quarry, and the heart of the hunter burns within him like a new-stirred fire. Shrill as the eagle's cry disturbed in his eyry, he sends a shout down the glen—and Flora, with cheeks pale and bright by fits, is at last at his side. Panting and speechless she stands—and then dizzily sinks on his breast. Her hair is ruffled by the wind that revives her, and her face all moistened by the snow-flakes, now not falling but driven—for the day has undergone a dismal change, and all over the skies are now lowering savage symptoms of a fast-coming night-storm.

Bare is poor Flora's head, and sorely drenched her hair, that an hour or two ago glittered in the sunshine. Her shivering frame misses now the warmth of the plaid, which almost no cold can penetrate, and which had kept

the vital current flowing freely in many a bitter blast. What would the miserable boy give now for the coverings lying far away, which, in his foolish passion, he flung down to chase that fatal deer! "Oh! Flora! if you would not fear to stay here by yourself—under the protection of God, who surely will not forsake you—soon will I go and come from the place where our plaids are lying; and under the shelter of the deer we may be able to outlive the hurricane—you wrapt up in them—and folded—O my dearest sister—in my arms!"—"I will go with you down the glen, Ranald!" and she left his breast—but, weak as a day-old lamb, tottered and sank down on the snow. The cold—intense as if the air were ice—had chilled her very heart, after the heat of that long race; and it was manifest that here she must be for the night—to live or to die. And the night seemed already come, so full was the lift of snow; while the glimmer every moment became gloomier, as if the day were expiring long before its time. Howling at a distance down the glen was heard a sea-born tempest from the Linnhe-Loch, where now they both knew the tide was tumbling in, bringing with it sleet and snow blasts from afar; and from the opposite quarter of the sky an inland tempest was raging to meet it, while every lesser glen had its own uproar, so that on all hands they were environed with death.

"I will go—and, till I return, leave you with God."—"Go, Ranald!" and he went and came—as if he had been endowed with the raven's wings!

Miles away—and miles back had he flown—and an

hour had not been with his going and his coming—but what a dreary wretchedness meanwhile had been hers! She feared that she was dying—that the cold snow-storm was killing her—and that she would never more see Ranald, to say to him farewell. Soon as he was gone, all her courage had died. Alone, she feared death, and wept to think how hard it was for one so young thus miserably to die. He came—and her whole being was changed. Folded up in both the plaids—she felt resigned. "Oh! kiss me—kiss me, Ranald—for your love—great as it is—is not as my love. You must never forget me, Ranald—when your poor Flora is dead."

Religion with these two young creatures was as clear as the light of the Sabbath-day—and their belief in heaven just the same as in earth. The will of God they thought of just as they thought of their parents' will—and the same was their loving obedience to its decrees. If she was to die—supported now by the presence of her brother—Flora was utterly resigned; if she were to live, her heart imaged to itself the very forms of her grateful worship. But all at once she closed her eyes—ceased breathing—and, as the tempest howled and rumbled in the gloom that fell around them like blindness, Ranald almost sank down, thinking that she was dead.

"Wretched sinner that I am!—my wicked madness brought her here to die of cold!" And he smote his breast—and tore his hair—and feared to look up, lest the angry eye of God were looking on him through the storm.

All at once, without speaking a word, Ranald lifted

Flora in his arms, and walked away up the glen—here almost narrowed into a pass. Distraction gave him supernatural strength, and her weight seemed that of a child. Some walls of what had once been a house, he had suddenly remembered, were but a short way off—whether or not they had any roof, he had forgotten; but the thought even of such shelter seemed a thought of salvation. There it was—a snow-drift at the opening that had once been a door—snow up the holes once windows—the wood of the roof had been carried off for fuel, and the snow-flakes were falling in, as if they would soon fill up the inside of the ruin. The snow in front was all trampled as if by sheep; and carrying in his burden under the low lintel, he saw the place was filled with a flock that had foreknown the hurricane, and that all huddled together looked on him as on the shepherd come to see how they were faring in the storm.

And a young shepherd he was, with a lamb apparently dying in his arms. All colour—all motion—all breath seemed to be gone—and yet something convinced his heart that she was yet alive. The ruined hut was roofless, but across an angle of the walls some pine-branches had been flung as a sort of shelter for the sheep or cattle that might repair thither in cruel weather—some pine-branches left by the woodcutters who had felled the few trees that once stood at the very head of the glen. Into that corner the snow-drift had not yet forced its way, and he sat down there with Flora in the cherishing of his embrace, hoping that the warmth of his distracted heart might be felt by her who was as cold as a

corpse. The chill air was somewhat softened by the breath of the huddled flock, and the edge of the cutting wind blunted by the stones. It was a place in which it seemed possible that she might revive—miserable as it was with mire-mixed snow—and almost as cold as one supposes the grave. And she did revive—and under the half-open lids the dim blue appeared to be not yet life-deserted. It was yet but the afternoon—nightlike though it was—and he thought, as he breathed upon her lips, that a faint red returned, and that they felt the kisses he dropt on them to drive death away.

"Oh! father, go seek for Ranald, for I dreamt to-night he was perishing in the snow!"—"Flora, fear not—God is with us."—"Wild swans, they say, are come to Loch-Phoil—let us go, Ranald, and see them—but no rifle—for why kill creatures said to be so beautiful?" Over them where they lay bended down the pine-branch roof, as if it would give way beneath the increasing weight;—but there it still hung—though the drift came over their feet and up to their knees, and seemed stealing upwards to be their shroud. "Oh! I am overcome with drowsiness, and fain would be allowed to sleep. Who is disturbing me—and what noise is this in our house?"—"Fear not—fear not, Flora—God is with us."—"Mother! am I lying in your arms? My father surely is not in the storm! Oh! I have had a most dreadful dream!" and with such mutterings as these Flora relapsed again into that perilous sleep—which soon becomes that of death.

Night itself came—but Flora and Ranald knew it

not—and both lay now motionless in one snow-shroud. Many passions—though earth-born, heavenly all—pity, and grief, and love, and hope, and at last despair—had prostrated the strength they had so long supported; and the brave boy—who had been for some time feeble as a very child after a fever—with a mind confused and wandering, and in its perplexities sore afraid of some nameless ill, had submitted to lay down his head beside his Flora's, and had soon become like her insensible to the night and all its storms!

Bright was the peat-fire in the hut of Flora's parents in Glenco—and they were among the happiest of the humbly happy, blessing this the birthday of their blameless child. They thought of her singing her sweet songs by the fireside of the hut in Glencreran—and tender thoughts of her cousin Ranald were with them in their prayers. No warning came to their ears in the sugh or the howl; for Fear it is that creates its own ghosts, and all its own ghostlike visitings, and they had seen their Flora in the meekness of the morning, setting forth on her way over the quiet mountains, like a fawn to play. Sometimes too Love, who starts at shadows as if they were of the grave, is strangely insensible to realities that might well inspire dismay. So was it now with the dwellers in the hut at the head of Glencreran. Their Ranald had left them in the morning—night had come, and he and Flora were not there—but the day had been almost like a summer-day, and in their infatuation they never doubted that the happy creatures had changed their minds, and that Flora had

returned with him to Glenco. Ranald had laughingly said, that haply he might surprise the people in that glen by bringing back to them Flora on her birthday—and, strange though it afterwards seemed to her to be, that belief prevented one single fear from touching his mother's heart, and she and her husband that night lay down in untroubled sleep.

And what could have been done for them, had they been told by some good or evil spirit that their children were in the clutches of such a night? As well seek for a single bark in the middle of the misty main! But the inland storm had been seen brewing among the mountains round King's-House, and hut had communicated with hut, though far apart in regions where the traveller sees no symptoms of human life. Down through the long cliff-pass of Mealanumy, between Buchael-Etive and the Black-Mount, towards the lone House of Dalness, that lives in everlasting shadows, went a band of shepherds, trampling their way across a hundred frozen streams. Dalness joined its strength—and then away over the drift-bridged chasms toiled that Gathering, with their sheep-dogs scouring the loose snows—in the van, Fingal the Red Reaver, with his head aloft on the look-out for deer, grimly eyeing the Correi where last he tasted blood. All "plaided in their tartan array," these shepherds laughed at the storm—and hark! you hear the bagpipe play—the music the Highlanders love both in war and in peace.

> "They think then of the ourie cattle,
> And silly sheep;"

and though they ken 'twill be a moonless night—for the snow-storm will sweep her out of heaven—up the mountain and down the glen they go, marking where flock and herd have betaken themselves, and now, at nightfall, unafraid of that blind hollow, they descend into the depth where once stood the old Grove of Pines. Following the dogs, who know their duties in their instinct, the band, without seeing it, are now close to that ruined hut. Why bark the sheep-dogs so—and why howls Fingal, as if some spirit passed athwart the night? He scents the dead body of the boy who so often had shouted him on in the forest, when the antlers went by! Not dead—nor dead she who is on his bosom. Yet life in both is frozen—and will the iced blood in their veins ever again be thawed? Almost pitch-dark is the roofless ruin—and the frightened sheep know not what is the terrible Shape that is howling there. But a man enters, and lifts up one of the bodies, giving it into the arms of them at the doorway—and then lifts up the other; and, by the flash of a rifle, they see that it is Ranald Cameron and Flora Macdonald, seemingly both frozen to death. Some of those reeds that the shepherds burn in their huts are kindled, and in that small light they are assured that such are the corpses. But that noble dog knows that death is not there—and licks the face of Ranald, as if he would restore life to his eyes. Two of the shepherds know well how to fold the dying in their plaids—how gentliest to carry them along; for they had learnt it on the field of victorious battle, when, without stumbling over the dead and wounded, they

bore away the shattered body—yet living—of the youthful warrior, who had shown that of such a Clan he was worthy to be the Chief.

The storm was with them all the way down the glen—nor could they have heard each other's voices had they spoke—but mutely they shifted the burden from strong hand to hand—thinking of the Hut in Glenco, and of what would be felt there on their arrival with the dying or dead. Blind people walk through what to them is the night of crowded day-streets—unpausing turn round corners—unhesitatingly plunge down steep stairs—wind their way fearlessly through whirlwinds of life—and reach in their serenity, each one unharmed, his own obscure house. For God is with the blind. So is he with all who walk on works of mercy. This saving band had no fear—and therefore there was no danger—on the edge of the pitfall or the cliff. They knew the countenances of the mountains shown momentarily by ghastly gleamings through the fitful night, and the hollow sound of each particular stream beneath the snow at places where in other weather there was a pool or a waterfall. The dip of the hills, in spite of the drifts, familiar to their feet, did not deceive them now; and then, the dogs in their instinct were guides that erred not, and as well as the shepherds knew it themselves did Fingal know that they were anxious to reach Glenco. He led the way, as if he were in moonlight; and often stood still when they were shifting their burden, and whined as if in grief. He knew where the bridges were—stones or logs; and he rounded the marshes

where at springs the wild-fowl feed. And thus Instinct, and Reason, and Faith conducted the saving band along—and now they are at Glenco—and at the door of the Hut.

To life were brought the dead; and there at midnight sat they up like ghosts. Strange seemed they—for a while—to each other's eyes—and at each other they looked as if they had forgotten how dearly once they loved. Then as if in holy fear they gazed on each other's faces, thinking that they had awoke together in heaven. "Flora!" said Ranald—and that sweet word, the first he had been able to speak, reminded him of all that had passed, and he knew that the God in whom they had put their trust had sent them deliverance. Flora, too, knew her parents, who were on their knees—and she strove to rise up and kneel down beside them—but she was powerless as a broken reed—and when she thought to join with them in thanksgiving, her voice was gone. Still as death sat all the people in the hut—and one or two who were fathers were not ashamed to weep.

Who were they—the solitary pair—all alone by themselves save a small image of her on whose breast it lay—whom—seven summers after—we came upon in our wanderings, before their Shieling in Correi-Vollach at the foot of Ben Chrulas, who sees his shadow in a hundred lochs? Who but Ranald and Flora!

* * * * * *

Nay, dry up—Daughter of our Age, dry up thy tears!

and we shall set a vision before thine eyes to fill them with unmoistened light.

Oft before have those woods and waters—those clouds and mountains—that sun and sky, held thy spirit in Elysium,—thy spirit, that then was disembodied, and living in the beauty and the glory of the elements. 'Tis Windermere—Windermere! Never canst thou have forgotten those more than fortunate—those thrice-blessed Isles! But when last we saw them within the still heaven of thy smiling eyes, summer suns had overloaded them with beauty, and they stooped their flowers and foliage down to the blushing, the burning deep, that glowed in its transparency with other groves as gorgeous as themselves, the whole mingling mass of reality and of shadow forming one creation. But now, lo! Windermere in Winter. All leafless now the groves that girdled her as if shifting rainbows were in love perpetually letting fall their colours on the Queen of Lakes. Gone now are her banks of emerald that carried our calm gazings with them, sloping away back into the cerulean sky. Her mountains, shadowy in sunshine, and seeming restless as seas, where are they now?—The cloud-cleaving cliffs that shot up into the blue region where the buzzard sailed? All gone. But mourn not for that loss. Accustom thine eye—and through it thy soul to that transcendent substitution, and deeply will they be reconciled. Sawest thou ever the bosom of the Lake hushed into profounder rest? No white-winged pinnace glides through the sunshine—no clanking oar is heard leaving or approaching cape, point, or bay—no music of voice, stop, or string,

wakens the sleeping echoes. How strangely dim and confused on the water the fantastic frostwork imagery, yet more steadfastly hanging there than ever hung the banks of summer! For all one sheet of ice, now clear as the Glass of Glamoury in which that Lord of old beheld his Geraldine—is Windermere, the heaven-loving and the heaven-beloved. Not a wavelet murmurs in all her bays, from the silvan Brathay to where the southern straits narrow into a river—now chained too the Leven on his silvan course towards that perilous Estuary afar off raging on its wreck-strewn sands. The frost came after the last fall of snow—and not a single flake ever touched that surface; and now that you no longer miss the green twinkling of the large July leaves, does not imagination love those motionless frozen forests, cold but not dead, serene but not sullen, inspirative in the strangeness of their appareling of wild thoughts about the scenery of foreign climes, far away among the regions of the North, where Nature works her wonders aloof from human eyes, and that wild architect Frost, during the absence of the sun, employs his night of months in building and dissolving his ice-palaces, magnificent beyond the reach of any power set to work at the bidding of earth's crowned and sceptred kings? All at once a hundred houses, high up among the hills, seem on fire. The setting sun has smitten them, and the snow-tracts are illuminated by harmless conflagrations. Their windows are all lighted up by a lurid splendour, in its strong suddenness sublime. But look, look we beseech you, at the sun—the sunset—the sunset region

—and all that kindred and corresponding heaven, effulgent where a minute ago lay in its cold glitter the blue bosom of the lake. Who knows the laws of light and the perpetual miracle of their operation? God—not thou. The snow-mountains are white no more, but gorgeous in their colouring as the clouds. Lo! Pavey-Ark—magnificent range of cliffs—seeming to come forward, while you gaze!—How it glows with a rosy light, as if a flush of flowers decked the precipice in that delicate splendour! Langdale-Pikes, methinks, are tinged with finest purple, and the thought of violets is with us as we gaze on the tinted bosom of the mountains dearest to the setting sun. But that long broad slip of orange-coloured sky is yellowing with its reflection almost all the rest of our Alps—all but yon stranger—the summit of some mountain belonging to another region—ay—the Great Gabel—silent now as sleep—when last we clomb his cliffs, thundering in the mists of all his cataracts. In his shroud he stands pallid like a ghost. Beyond the reach of the setting sun he lours in his exclusion from the rejoicing light, and imagination personifying his solitary vastness into forsaken life, pities the doom of the forlorn Giant. Ha! just as the eye of day is about to shut, one smile seems sent afar to that lonesome mountain, and a crown of crimson encompasses his forehead.

On which of the two sunsets art thou now gazing? Thou who art to our old loving eyes so like the "mountain nymph, sweet Liberty?" On the sunset in the heaven—or the sunset in the lake? The divine truth is—O Daughter of our Age!—that both sunsets are but

visions of our own spirits. Again both are gone from the outward world—and nought remains but a forbidding frown of the cold bleak snow. But imperishable in thy imagination will both sunsets be—and though it will sometimes retire into the recesses of thy memory, and lie there among the unsuspected treasures of forgotten imagery that have been unconsciously accumulating there since first those gentle eyes of thine had perfect vision given to their depths—yet mysteriously brought back from vanishment by some one single silent thought, to which power has been yielded over that bright portion of the Past, will both of them sometimes reappear to thee in solitude—or haply when in the very heart of life. And then surely a few tears will fall for sake of him—then no more seen—by whose side thou stoodest, when that double sunset enlarged thy sense of beauty, and made thee in thy father's eyes the sweetest—best—and brightest poetess—whose whole life is musical inspiration—ode, elegy, and hymn, sung not in words but in looks—sigh-breathed or speechlessly distilled in tears flowing from feelings the farthest in this world from grief.

So much, though but little, for the beautiful—with, perhaps, a tinge of the sublime. Are the two emotions different and distinct—thinkst thou, O! metaphysical critic of the gruesome countenance—or modifications of one and the same? 'Tis a puzzling question—and we, Sphinx, might wait till doomsday, before you, Œdipus, could solve the enigma. Certainly a Rose is one thing and Mount Ætna is another—an antelope and an ele-

phant—an insect and a man-of-war, both sailing in the sun—a little lucid well in which the fairies bathe, and the Polar Sea in which Leviathan is "wallowing unwieldy, enormous in his gait"—the jewelled finger of a virgin bride, and grim Saturn with his ring—the upward eye of a kneeling saint, and a comet, "that from his horrid hair shakes pestilence and war." But let the rose bloom on the mouldering ruins of the palace of some great king—among the temples of Balbec or Syrian Tadmor—and in its beauty, methinks, 'twill be also sublime. See the antelope bounding across a raging chasm—up among the region of eternal snows on Mont Blanc—and deny it, if you please—but assuredly we think that there is sublimity in the fearless flight of that beautiful creature, to whom nature grudged not wings, but gave instead the power of plumes to her small delicate limbs, unfractured by alighting among the pointed rocks. All alone, by your single solitary self, in some wide, lifeless desert, could you deny sublimity to the unlooked-for hum of the tiniest insect, or to the sudden shiver of the beauty of his gauze-wings? Not you, indeed. Stooping down to quench your thirst in that little lucid well where the fairies bathe, what if you saw the image of the evening star shining in some strange subterranean world? We suspect that you would hold in your breath, and swear devoutly that it was sublime. Dead on the very evening of her marriage day is that virgin bride whose delicacy was so beautiful—and as she lies in her white wedding garments that serve for a shroud—that emblem of eternity and of eternal love, the ring,

upon her finger—with its encased star shining brightly now that her eyes, once stars, are closed—would, methinks, be sublime to all Christian hearts. In comparison with all these beautiful sublimities, Mount Ætna, the elephant, the man-of-war, Leviathan swimming the ocean-stream, Saturn with his ring, and with his horrid hair the comet—might be all less than nothings. Therefore beauty and sublimity are twin-feelings—one and the same birth—seldom inseparable;—if you still doubt it, become a fire-worshipper, and sing your morning and evening orisons to the rising and the setting sun.

THE HOLY CHILD.

THIS House of ours is a prison—this Study of ours a cell. Time has laid his fetters on our feet—fetters fine as the gossamer, but strong as Samson's ribs, silken-soft to wise submission, but to vain impatience galling as cankered wound that keeps ceaselessly eating into the bone. But while our bodily feet are thus bound by an inevitable and inexorable law, our mental wings are free as those of the lark, the dove, or the eagle—and they shall be expanded as of yore, in calm or tempest, now touching with their tips the bosom of this dearly beloved earth, and now aspiring heavenwards, beyond the realms of mist and cloud, even unto the very core of the still heart of that otherwise unapproachable sky which graciously opens to receive us on our flight, when, disencumbered of the burden of all grovelling thoughts, and strong in spirituality, we exult to soar

"Beyond this visible diurnal sphere,"

nearing and nearing the native region of its own incomprehensible being.

Now touching, we said, with their tips the bosom of

this dearly beloved earth! How sweet that attraction to imagination's wings! How delightful in that lower flight to skim along the green ground, or as now along the soft-bosomed beauty of the virgin snow! We were asleep all night long—sound asleep as children—while the flakes were falling, "and soft as snow on snow" were all the descendings of our untroubled dreams. The moon and all her stars were willing that their lustre should be veiled by that peaceful shower; and now the sun, pleased with the purity of the morning earth, all white as innocence, looks down from heaven with a meek unmelting light, and still leaves undissolved the stainless splendour. There is Frost in the air—but he "does his spiriting gently," studding the ground-snow thickly with diamonds, and shaping the tree-snow according to the peculiar and characteristic beauty of the leaves and sprays, on which it has alighted almost as gently as the dews of spring. You know every kind of tree still by its own spirit showing itself through that fairy veil—momentarily disguised from recognition—but admired the more in the sweet surprise with which again your heart salutes its familiar branches, all fancifully ornamented with their snow-foliage, that murmurs not like the green leaves of summer, that like the yellow leaves of autumn strews not the earth with decay, but often melts away into changes so invisible and inaudible, that you wonder to find that it is all vanished, and to see the old tree again standing in its own faint-green glossy bark, with its many million buds, which perhaps fancy suddenly expands into a power of umbrage impenetrable to the sun in Scorpio.

A sudden burst of sunshine! bringing back the pensive spirit from the past to the present, and kindling it, till it dances like light reflected from a burning mirror. A cheerful Sun-scene, though almost destitute of life. An undulating Landscape, hillocky and hilly, but not mountainous, and buried under the weight of a day and night's incessant and continuous snow-fall. The weather has not been windy—and now that the flakes have ceased falling, there is not a cloud to be seen, except some delicate braidings here and there along the calm of the Great Blue Sea of Heaven. Most luminous is the sun, yet you can look straight on his face, almost with unwinking eyes, so mild and mellow is his large light as it overflows the day. All enclosures have disappeared, and you indistinctly ken the greater landmarks, such as a grove, a wood, a hall, a castle, a spire, a village, a town—the faint haze of a far off and smokeless city. Most intense is the silence; for all the streams are dumb, and the great river lies like a dead serpent in the strath. Not dead—for, lo! yonder one of his folds glitters—and in the glitter you see him moving—while all the rest of his sullen length is palsied by frost, and looks livid and more livid at every distant and more distant winding. What blackens on that tower of snow? Crows roosting innumerous on a huge tree—but they caw not in their hunger. Neither sheep nor cattle are to be seen or heard—but they are cared for;—the folds and the farm-yards are all full of life—and the ungathered stragglers are safe in their instincts. There has been a deep fall—but no storm—and the

silence, though partly that of suffering, is not that of death. Therefore, to the imagination, unsaddened by the heart, the repose is beautiful. The almost unbroken uniformity of the scene—its simple and grand monotony—lulls all the thoughts and feelings into a calm, over which is breathed the gentle excitation of a novel charm, inspiring many fancies, all of a quiet character. Their range, perhaps, is not very extensive, but they all regard the homefelt and domestic charities of life. And the heart burns as here and there some human dwelling discovers itself by a wreath of smoke up the air, or as the robin redbreast, a creature that is ever at hand, comes flitting before your path with an almost pert flutter of his feathers, bold from the acquaintanceship he has formed with you in severer weather at the threshold or window of the tenement, which for years may have been the winter sanctuary of the "bird whom man loves best," and who bears a Christian name in every clime he inhabits. Meanwhile the sun waxes brighter and warmer in heaven—some insects are in the air, as if that moment called to life—and the mosses that may yet be visible here and there along the ridge of a wall or on the stem of a tree, in variegated lustre frost-brightened, seem to delight in the snow, and in no other season of the year to be so happy as in winter. Such gentle touches of pleasure animate one's whole being, and connect, by many a fine association, the emotions inspired by the objects of animate and of inanimate nature.

Ponder on the idea—the emotion of purity—and how finely soul-blent is the delight imagination feels in a

bright hush of new-fallen snow! Some speck or stain —however slight—there always seems to be on the most perfect whiteness of any other substance—or "dim suffusion veils" it with some faint discolour—witness even the leaf of the lily or the rose. Heaven forbid that we should ever breathe aught but love and delight in the beauty of these consummate flowers! But feels not the heart, even when the midsummer morning sunshine is melting the dews on their fragrant bosoms, that their loveliness is "of the earth earthy"—faintly tinged or streaked, when at the very fairest, with a hue foreboding languishment and decay? Not the less for its sake are those soulless flowers dear to us—thus owning kindred with them whose beauty is all soul enshrined for a short while on that perishable face. Do we not still regard the insensate flowers—so emblematical of what, in human life, we do most passionately love and profoundly pity—with a pensive emotion, often deepening into melancholy that sometimes, ere the strong fit subsides, blackens into despair! What pain doubtless was in the heart of the Elegiac Poet of old, when he sighed over the transitory beauty of flowers—

"Conquerimur natura brevis quam gratia Florum!"

But over a perfectly pure expanse of night-fallen snow, when unaffected by the gentle sun, the first fine frost has incrusted it with small sparkling diamonds, the prevalent emotion is Joy. There is a charm in the sudden and total disappearance even of the grassy green. All the "old familiar faces" of nature are for a while out of sight, and out of mind. That white

silence shed by heaven over earth carries with it, far and wide, the pure peace of another region—almost another life. No image is there to tell of this restless and noisy world. The cheerfulness of reality kindles up our reverie ere it becomes a dream; and we are glad to feel our whole being complexioned by the passionless repose. If we think at all of human life, it is only of the young, the fair, and the innocent. "Pure as snow," are words then felt to be most holy, as the image of some beautiful and beloved being comes and goes before our eyes—brought from a far distance in this our living world, or from a distance further still in a world beyond the grave—the image of virgin growing up sinlessly to womanhood among her parents' prayers, or of some spiritual creature who expired long ago, and carried with her her native innocence unstained to heaven.

Such Spiritual Creature,—too spiritual long to sojourn below the skies—wert Thou—whose rising and whose setting—both most starlike—brightened at once all thy native vale, and at once left it in darkness. Thy name has long slept in our heart—and there let it sleep unbreathed—even as, when we are dreaming our way through some solitary place, without naming it we bless the beauty of some sweet wild-flower, pensively smiling to us through the snow.

The Sabbath returns on which, in the little kirk among the hills, we saw thee baptized. Then comes a wavering glimmer of five sweet years, that to Thee, in all their varieties, were but as one delightful season,

one blessed life—and, finally, that other Sabbath, on which, at thy own dying request—between services thou wert buried.

How mysterious are all thy ways and workings, O gracious Nature! Thou who art but a name given by us to the Being in whom all things are and have life. Ere three years old, she, whose image is now with us, all over the small silvan world that beheld the evanescent revelation of her pure existence, was called the "Holy Child!" The taint of sin—inherited from those who disobeyed in Paradise—seemed from her fair clay to have been washed out at the baptismal font, and by her first infantine tears. So pious people almost believed, looking on her so unlike all other children, in the serenity of that habitual smile that clothed the creature's countenance with a wondrous beauty, at an age when on other infants is but faintly seen the dawn of reason, and their eyes look happy just like the thoughtless flowers. So unlike all other children—but unlike only because sooner than they she seemed to have had given to her, even in the communion of the cradle, an intimation of the being and the providence of God. Sooner, surely, than through any other clay that ever enshrouded immortal spirit, dawned the light of religion on the face of the "Holy Child."

Her lisping language was sprinkled with words alien from common childhood's uncertain speech, that murmurs only when indigent nature prompts; and her own parents wondered whence they came, when first they looked upon her kneeling in an unbidden pray-

er. As one mild week of vernal sunshine covers the braes with primroses, so shone with fair and fragrant feelings—unfolded, ere they knew, before her parents' eyes—the divine nature of her who for a season was lent to them from the skies. She learned to read out of the Bible—almost without any teaching—they knew not how—just by looking gladly on the words, even as she looked on the pretty daisies on the green—till their meanings stole insensibly into her soul, and the sweet syllables, succeeding each other on the blessed page, were all united by the memories her heart had been treasuring every hour that her father or her mother had read aloud in her hearing from the Book of Life. "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven"—how wept her parents, as these the most affecting of our Saviour's words dropt silver-sweet from her lips, and continued in her upward eyes among the swimming tears!

Be not incredulous of this dawn of reason, wonderful as it may seem to you, so soon becoming morn—almost perfect daylight—with the "Holy Child." Many such miracles are set before us—but we recognize them not, or pass them by with a word or a smile of short surprise. How leaps the baby in its mother's arms, when the mysterious charm of music thrills through its little brain! And how learns it to modulate its feeble voice, unable yet to articulate, to the melodies that bring forth all round its eyes a delighted smile! Who knows what then may be the thoughts and feelings of the infant awakened to the sense of a new world, alive through all

its being to sounds that haply glide past our ears unmeaning as the breath of the common air! Thus have mere infants sometimes been seen inspired by music, till, like small genii, they warbled spell-strains of their own, powerful to sadden and subdue our hearts. So, too, have infant eyes been so charmed by the rainbow irradiating the earth, that almost infant hands have been taught, as if by inspiration, the power to paint in finest colours, and to imitate with a wondrous art, the skies so beautiful to the quick-awakened spirit of delight. What knowledge have not some children acquired, and gone down scholars to their small untimely graves! Knowing that such things have been—are—and will be—why art thou incredulous of the divine expansion of soul, so soon understanding the things that are divine—in the "Holy Child?"

Thus grew she in the eye of God, day by day waxing wiser and wiser in the knowledge that tends towards the skies; and, as if some angel visitant were nightly with her in her dreams, awakening every morn with a new dream of thought, that brought with it a gift of more comprehensive speech. Yet merry she was at times with her companions among the woods and braes, though while they all were laughing, she only smiled; and the passing traveller, who might pause for a moment to bless the sweet creatures in their play, could not but single out one face among the many fair, so pensive in its paleness, a face to be remembered, coming from afar, like a mournful thought upon the hour of joy.

Sister or brother of her own had she none—and often

both her parents—who lived in a hut by itself up among the mossy stumps of the old decayed forest—had to leave her alone—sometimes even all the day long from morning till night. But she no more wearied in her solitariness than does the wren in the wood. All the flowers were her friends—all the birds. The linnet ceased not his song for her, though her footsteps wandered into the green glade among the yellow broom, almost within reach of the spray from which he poured his melody—the quiet eyes of his mate feared her not when her garments almost touched the bush where she brooded on her young. Shyest of the winged sylvans, the cushat clapped not her wings away on the soft approach of such harmless footsteps to the pine that concealed her slender nest. As if blown from heaven, descended round her path the showers of the painted butterflies, to feed, sleep, or die—undisturbed by her —upon the wild-flowers—with wings, when motionless, undistinguishable from the blossoms. And well she loved the brown, busy, blameless bees, come thither for the honey-dews from a hundred cots sprinkled all over the parish, and all high overhead sailing away at evening, laden and wearied, to their straw-roofed skeps in many a hamlet garden. The leaf of every tree, shrub, and plant, she knew familiarly and lovingly in its own characteristic beauty; and she was loath to shake one dew-drop from the sweetbrier-rose. And well she knew that all nature loved her in return—that they were dear to each other in their innocence—and that the very sunshine, in motion or in rest, was ready to come at the

bidding of her smiles. Skilful those small white hands of hers among the reeds and rushes and osiers—and many a pretty flower-basket grew beneath their touch, her parents wondering on their return home to see the handiwork of one who was never idle in her happiness. Thus early—ere yet but five years old—did she earn her mite for the sustenance of her own beautiful life. The russet garb she wore she herself had won—and thus Poverty, at the door of that hut, became even like a Guardian Angel, with the lineaments of heaven on her brow, and the quietude of heaven beneath her feet.

But these were but her lonely pastimes, or gentle taskwork self-imposed among her pastimes, and itself the sweetest of them all, inspired by a sense of duty that still brings with it its own delight, and hallowed by religion, that even in the most adverse lot changes slavery into freedom—till the heart, insensible to the bonds of necessity, sings aloud for joy. The life within the life of the "Holy Child," apart from even such innocent employments as these, and from such recreations as innocent, among the shadows and the sunshine of those silvan haunts, was passed—let us fear not to say the truth, wondrous as such worship was in one so very young—was passed in the worship of God; and her parents—though sometimes even saddened to see such piety in a small creature like her, and afraid, in their exceeding love, that it betokened an early removal from this world of one too perfectly pure ever to be touched by its sins and sorrows—forbore, in an awful pity, ever to remove the Bible from her knees, as she would sit

with it there, not at morning and at evening only, or all the Sabbath long as soon as they returned from the kirk, but often through all the hours of the longest and sunniest week-days, when, had she chosen to do so, there was nothing to hinder her from going up the hill-side, or down to the little village, to play with the other children, always too happy when she appeared—nothing to hinder her but the voice she heard speaking in that Book, and the hallelujahs that, at the turning over of each blessed page, came upon the ear of the "Holy Child" from white-robed saints all kneeling before His throne in heaven.

Her life seemed to be the same in sleep. Often at midnight, by the light of the moon shining in upon her little bed beside theirs, her parents leant over her face, diviner in dreams, and wept as she wept, her lips all the while murmuring, in broken sentences of prayer, the name of Him who died for us all. But plenteous as were her penitential tears — penitential in the holy humbleness of her stainless spirit, over thoughts that had never left a dimming breath on its purity, yet that seemed in those strange visitings to be haunting her as the shadows of sins—soon were they all dried up in the lustre of her returning smiles. Waking, her voice in the kirk was the sweetest among many sweet, as all the young singers, and she the youngest far, sat together by themselves, and within the congregational music of the psalm uplifted a silvery strain that sounded like the very spirit of the whole, even like angelic harmony blent with a mortal song. But sleeping, still more sweetly

sang the "Holy Child;" and then, too, in some diviner inspiration than ever was granted to it while awake, her soul composed its own hymns, and set the simple scriptural words to its own mysterious music—the tunes she loved best gliding into one another, without once ever marring the melody, with pathetic touches interposed never heard before, and never more to be renewed! For each dream had its own breathing, and many-visioned did then seem to be the sinless creature's sleep.

The love that was borne for her all over the hill-region, and beyond its circling clouds, was almost such as mortal creatures might be thought to feel for some existence that had visibly come from heaven. Yet all who looked on her, saw that she, like themselves, was mortal, and many an eye was wet, the heart wist not why, to hear such wisdom falling from such lips; for dimly did it prognosticate, that as short as bright would be her walk from the cradle to the grave. And thus for the "Holy Child" was their love elevated by awe, and saddened by pity—and as by herself she passed pensively by their dwellings, the same eyes that smiled on her presence, on her disappearance wept.

Not in vain for others—and for herself, oh! what great gain!—for those few years on earth did that pure spirit ponder on the word of God! Other children became pious from their delight in her piety—for she was simple as the simplest among them all, and walked with them hand in hand, nor declined companionship with any one that was good. But all grew good by being with her—and parents had but to whisper her name,

and in a moment the passionate sob was hushed—the lowering brow lighted—and the household in peace. Older hearts owned the power of the piety so far surpassing their thoughts; and time-hardened sinners, it is said, when looking and listening to the "Holy Child," knew the error of their ways, and returned to the right path as at a voice from heaven.

Bright was her seventh summer—the brightest, so the aged said, that had ever, in man's memory, shone over Scotland. One long, still, sunny, blue day followed another, and in the rainless weather, though the dews kept green the hills, the song of the streams was low. But paler and paler, in sunlight and moonlight, became the sweet face that had been always pale; and the voice that had been always something mournful, breathed lower and sadder still from the too perfect whiteness of her breast. No need—no fear—to tell her that she was about to die. Sweet whispers had sung it to her in her sleep—and waking she knew it in the look of the piteous skies. But she spoke not to her parents of death more than she had often done—and never of her own. Only she seemed to love them with a more exceeding love—and was readier, even sometimes when no one was speaking, with a few drops of tears. Sometimes she disappeared—nor, when sought for, was found in the woods about the hut. And one day that mystery was cleared; for a shepherd saw her sitting by herself on a grassy mound in a nook of the small solitary kirkyard, a long mile off among the hills, so lost in reading the Bible, that shadow or sound of his feet awoke her not; and, ignorant

of his presence, she knelt down and prayed—for a while weeping bitterly—but soon comforted by a heavenly calm —that her sins might be forgiven her!

One Sabbath evening, soon after, as she was sitting beside her parents at the door of their hut, looking first for a long while on their faces, and then for a long while on the sky, though it was not yet the stated hour of worship, she suddenly knelt down, and leaning on their knees, with hands clasped more fervently than her wont, she broke forth into tremulous singing of that hymn which from her lips they never heard without unendurable tears:

> "The hour of my departure's come,
> I hear the voice that calls me home;
> At last, O Lord, let trouble cease,
> And let thy servant die in peace!"

They carried her fainting to her little bed, and uttered not a word to one another till she revived. The shock was sudden, but not unexpected, and they knew now that the hand of death was upon her, although her eyes soon became brighter and brighter, they thought, than they had ever been before. But forehead, cheeks, lips, neck, and breast, were all as white, and, to the quivering hands that touched them, almost as cold as snow. Ineffable was the bliss in those radiant eyes; but the breath of words was frozen, and that hymn was almost her last farewell. Some few words she spake—and named the hour and day she wished to be buried. Her lips could then just faintly return the kiss, and no more—a film came over the now dim blue of her eyes—the father

listened for her breath—and then the mother took his place, and leaned her ear to the unbreathing mouth, long deluding herself with its lifelike smile; but a sudden darkness in the room, and a sudden stillness, most dreadful both, convinced their unbelieving hearts at last, that it was death.

All the parish, it may be said, attended her funeral—for none stayed away from the kirk that Sabbath—though many a voice was unable to join in the Psalm. The little grave was soon filled up—and you hardly knew that the turf had been disturbed beneath which she lay. The afternoon service consisted but of a prayer—for he who ministered, had loved her with love unspeakable—and, though an old greyhaired man, all the time he prayed he wept. In the sobbing kirk her parents were sitting, but no one looked at them—and when the congregation rose to go, there they remained sitting—and an hour afterwards, came out again into the open air, and parting with their pastor at the gate, walked away to their hut, overshadowed with the blessing of a thousand prayers.

And did her parents, soon after she was buried, die of broken hearts, or pine away disconsolately to their graves? Think not that they, who were Christians indeed, could be guilty of such ingratitude. "The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away—blessed be the name of the Lord!" were the first words they had spoke by that bedside; during many, many long years of weal or wo, duly every morning and night, these same blessed words did they utter when on their knees together in prayer—and many a thousand times besides, when they

were apart, she in her silent hut, and he on the hill—neither of them unhappy in their solitude; though never again, perhaps, was his countenance so cheerful as of yore—and though often suddenly amidst mirth or sunshine their eyes were seen to overflow. Happy had they been—as we mortal beings ever can be happy—during many pleasant years of wedded life before she had been born. And happy were they—on to the verge of old age—long after she had here ceased to be. Their Bible had indeed been an idle book—the Bible that belonged to "the Holy Child,"—and idle all their kirk-goings with "the Holy Child," through the Sabbath-calm—had those intermediate years not left a power of bliss behind them triumphant over death and the grave.

OUR PARISH.

NATURE must be bleak and barren indeed to possess no power over the young spirit daily expanding on her breast into new susceptibilities, that erelong are felt to fill life to overflowing with a perpetual succession—an infinite series—of enjoyments. Nowhere is she destitute of that power—not on naked sea-shores—not in central deserts. But our boyhood was environed by the beautiful—its home was among moors and mountains, which people in towns and cities called dreary, but which we knew to be the cheerfullest and most gladsome parish in all braid Scotland—and well it might be, for it was in her very heart. Mountains they seemed to us in those days, though now we believe they are only hills. But such hills!—undulating far and wide away till the highest even on clear days seemed to touch the sky, and in cloudy weather were verily a part of heaven. Many a valley, and many a glen—and many a hollow that was neither valley nor glen—and many a flat, of but a few green acres, which we thought plains—and many a cleft waterless with its birks and brechans, except when the

rains came down, and then they all sang a new song in merry chorus—and many a wood, and many a grove, for it takes no great number of trees to make a wood, and four firs by themselves in a lonesome place are a grove —and many a single sycamore, and many a single ash, kenned afar-off above its protected cottage—and many an indescribable spot of scenery, at once pastoral, and agricultural and silvan, where, if house there was, you hardly knew it among the rocks;—so was Our Parish, which people in towns and cities called dreary, composed; but the composition itself—as well might we hope thus to show it to your soul's eye, as by a few extracts however fine, and a few criticisms however exquisite, to give you the idea of a perfect poem.

But we have not given you more than a single hint of a great part of our Parish—the Moor. It was then ever so many miles long, and ever so many miles broad, and nobody thought of guessing how many miles round —but some twenty years ago it was absolutely measured to a rood by a land-louper of a land-surveyor—distributed—drained—enclosed—utterly ruined for ever. No, not for ever. Nature laughs to scorn acts of Parliament, and we predict that in a quarter of a century she will resume her management of that moor. We rejoice to hear that she is beginning already to take lots of it into her own hands. Wheat has no business there, and should keep to the carses. In spring, she takes him by the braird till he looks yellow in the face long before his time—in summer, by the cuff of the neck till he lies down on his back and rots in the rain—in autumn, by the ears,

and rubs him against the grain till he expires as fushionless as the winnlestraes with which he is interlaced—in winter, she shakes him in the stook till he is left but a shadow which pigeons despise. See him in stack at Christmas, and you pity the poor straw. Here and there bits of bear or big, and barley, she permits to flourish—nor is she loth to see the flowers and shaws and apples on the poor man's plant, the life-sustaining potato—which none but political economists hate and all Christians love. She is not so sure about turnips, but as they are a green crop she leaves them to the care of the fly. But where have her gowans gone? There they still are in flocks, which no cultivation can scatter or eradicate —inextinguishable by all the lime that was ever brought unslokened from all the kilns that ever glowed—by all the dung that was ever heaped up fresh and fuming from all the Augean stables in the land. Yet her heart burns within her to behold, even in the midst of what she abhors, the large dew-loved heads of clover whitening or reddening, or with their rival colours amicably intermingled, a new birth glorious in the place of reedy marish or fen where the catspaws nodded—and them she will retain unto herself when once more she shall rejoice in her Wilderness Restored.

And would we be so barbarous as to seek to impede the progress of improvement, and to render agriculture a dead letter? We are not so barbarous, nor yet so savage. We love civilized life, of which we have long been one of the smaller but sincerest ornaments. But agriculture, like education, has its bounds. It is, like it, a

science, and wo to the country that encourages all kinds of quacks. Cultivate a moor! educate a boor! First understand the character of Clods and Clodhoppers. To say nothing now of the Urbans and Suburbans—a perilous people—yet of great capabilities; for to discuss that question would lead us into lanes; and as it is a long lane that has never a turning, for the present we keep in the open air, and abstain from wynds. We are no enemies to poor soils, far less to rich ones ignorantly and stupidly called poor, which under proper treatment effuse riches; but to expect to extract from paupers *a return* for the expenditure squandered by miserly greed on their reluctant bottoms, cold and bare, is the insanity of speculation; and such schemers deserve being buried along with their capital in quagmires. Heavens! how they—the quagmires—suck in the dung! You say they don't suck it in—well, then, they spew it out—it evaporates—and what is the worth of weeds? Lime whitens a moss, that is true, but so does snow. Snow melts—what becomes of lime no mortal knows but the powheads—them it poisons, and they give up the ghost. Drains are dug deep now-a-days—and we respect Mr Johnstone. So are gold mines. But from gold mines that precious metal—at a great expense, witness its price—is exterred; in drains that precious metal, witness wages, is interred, and then it becomes *squash*. Stirks starve—heifers are hove with windy nothing—with oxen frogs compete in bulk with every prospect of a successful issue, and on such pasturage where would be the virility of the Bulls of Bashan?

If we be in error, we shall be forgiven at least by all lovers of the past, and what to the elderly seems the olden time. Oh, misery for that Moor! Hundreds, thousands, loved it as well as we did; for though it grew no grain, many a glorious crop it bore—shadows that glided like ghosts—the giants stalked—the dwarfs crept;—yet sometimes were the dwarfs more formidable than the giants, lying like blackamoors before your very feet, and as you stumbled over them in the dark, throttling as if they sought to strangle you, and then leaving you at your leisure to wipe from your mouth the mire by the light of a straggling star;—sunbeams that wrestled with the shadows in the gloom—sometimes clean flung, and then they cowered into the heather, and insinuated themselves into the earth; sometimes victorious, and then how they capered in the lift, ere they shivered away—not always without a hymn of thunder—in behind the clouds, to refresh themselves in their tabernacle in the sky.

Won't you be done with this Moor, you monomaniac? Not for yet a little while—for we see Kitty North all by himself in the heart of it, a boy apparently about the age of twelve, and happy as the day is long, though it is the Longest Day in all the year. Aimless he seems to be, but all alive as a grashopper, and is leaping like a two-year-old across the hags. Were he to tumble in, what would become of the personage whom Kean's Biographer would call "the future Christopher the First." But no fear of that—for at no period of his life did he ever overrate his powers—and he knows now his

bound to an inch. Cap, bonnet, hat, he has none; and his yellow hair, dancing on his shoulders like a mane, gives him the look of a precocious lion's whelp. Leonine too is his aspect, yet mild withal; and but for a certain fierceness in his gambols, you would not suspect he was a young creature of prey. A fowling-piece is in his left hand, and in his right a rod. And what may he be purposing to shoot? Any thing full-fledged that may play whirr or sugh. Good grouse-ground this; but many are yet in the egg, and the rest are but cheepers—little bigger than the small brown moorland bird that goes birling up with its own short epithalamium, and drops down on the rushes still as a stone. Them he harms not on their short flight—but marking them down, twirls his piece like a fugleman, and thinks of the Twelfth. Safer methinks wilt thou be a score or two yards further off, O Whawp! for though thy young are yet callow, Kit is beginning to think they may shift for themselves; and that long bill and that long neck, and those long legs and that long body—the *tout-ensemble* so elegant, so graceful, and so wild—are a strong temptation to the trigger;—click—clack—whizz—phew—fire—smoke and thunder—head-over-heels topsy-turvy goes the poor curlew—and Kit stands over him leaning on his single-barrel, with a stern but somewhat sad aspect, exulting in his skill, yet sorry for the creature whose wild cry will be heard no more.

'Tis an oasis in the desert. That green spot is called a quagmire—an ugly name enough—but itself is beautiful; for it diffuses its own light round about it, like a

star vivifying its halo. The sward encircling it is firm —and Kit lays him down, heedless of the bird, with eyes fixed on the oozing spring. How fresh the wild cresses! His very eyes are drinking! His thirst is at once excited and satisfied by looking at the lustrous leaves—composed of cooling light without spot or stain. What ails the boy? He covers his face with his hands, and in the silence sighs. A small white hand, with its fingers spread, rises out of the spring, as if it were beckoning to heaven in prayer—and then is sucked slowly in again out of sight with a gurgling groan. The spring so fresh and fair—so beautiful with its cresses and many another water-loving plant beside—is changed into the same horrid quagmire it was that day—a holy-day—three years ago—when racing in her joy Amy Lewars blindly ran into it, among her blithe companions, and suddenly perished. Childhood, they say, soon dries its tears, and soon forgets. God be praised for all his goodness! true it is that on the cheek of childhood tears are dried up as if by the sunshine of joy stealing from on high—but, God be praised for all his goodness! false it is that the heart of childhood has not a long memory, for in a moment the mournful past revives within it—as often as the joyful—sadness becomes sorrow, sorrow grief, and grief anguish, as now it is with the solitary boy seated by that ghastly spot in the middle of the wide moor.

Away he flies, and he is humming a tune. But what's this? A merry-making in the moor? Ay, merry-making; but were you to take part in it, you would find it about the hardest work that ever tried

the strength of your spine. 'Tis a party of divot-flaughters. The people in the parish are now digging their peats, and here is a whole household, provident of winter, borrowing fuel from the moss. They are far from coals, and wood is intended by nature for other uses; but fire in peat she dedicated to the hearth, and there it burns all over Scotland, Highland and Lowland, far and near, at many a holy altar. 'Tis the mid-day hour of rest. Some are half-asleep, some yet eating, some making a sort of under-voiced, under-hand love. "Mr North! Mr North! Mr North!" is the joyful cry—horny-fists first—downy-fists next—and after heartiest greeting, Master Kitty is installed, enthroned on a knowe, Master of the Ceremonies—and in good time gives them a song. Then "galliards cry a hall, a hall," and hark and lo! preluded by six smacks—three foursome reels! "Sic hirdum-dirdum and sic din," on the sward, to a strathspey frae the fiddle o' auld blin' Hugh Lyndsay, the itinerant musicianer, who was noways particular about the number of his strings, and when one, or even two snapped, used to play away at pretty much of the same tune with redoubled energy and variations. He had the true old Niel-Gow yell, and had he played on for ever, folk would have danced on for ever till they had all, one after the other, dropped down dead. What steps!

"Who will try me," cries Kit, "at loup-the-barrows?" "I will," quoth Souple Tam. The barrows are laid—how many side by side we fear to say—for we have become sensitive on our veracity—on a beautiful piece

of springy-turf, an inclined plane with length sufficient for a run; and while old and young line both sides of the lane near the loup, stript to the sark and the breeks, Souple Tam, as he fondly thinks, shows the way to win, and clears them all like a frog or a roebuck. "Clear the way, clear the way for the callant, Kit's coming!" cries Ebenezer Brackenrigg, the Elder, a douce man now, but a deevil in his youth, and like "a waff o' lichtnin'" past their een, Kit clears the barrows a foot beyond Souple Tam, and at the first fly is declared victor by acclamation. Oh, our unprophetic soul! did the day indeed dawn—many long years after this our earliest great conquest yet traditional in the parish—that ere nightfall witnessed our defeat by—a tailor! The Flying Tailor of Etterick—the Lying Shepherd thereof—would they had never been born—the one to triumph and the other to record that triumph; —yet let us be just to the powers of our rival—for though all the world knows we were lame when we leapt him, long past our prime, had been wading all day in the Yarrow with some stones-weight in our creel, and allowed him a yard,

"Great must I call him, for he vanquish'd ME."

What a place at night was that Moor! At night! That is a most indeterminate mode of expression, for there are nights of all sorts and sizes, and what kind of a night do we mean? Not a mirk night, for no man ever walked that moor on a mirk night, except one, and he, though blind-fou, was drowned. But a night may be dark without being mirk, with or without stars; and

on many such a night have we, but not always alone—who was with us you shall never know—threaded our way with no other clue than that of evolving recollections, originally notices, across that wilderness of labyrinths, fearlessly, yet at times with a beating heart. Our companion had her clue too, one in her pocket, of blue worsted, with which she kept in repair all the stockings belonging to the family, and one in her memory, of green ethereal silk, which, finer far than any spider's web, she let out as she tript along the moor, and on her homeward-way she felt, by some spiritual touch, the invisible lines, along which she retript as safely as if they had been moonbeams. During such journeyings we never saw the moor, how then can you expect us to describe it?

But oftener we were alone. Earthquakes abroad are dreadful occurrences, and blot out the obituary. But here they are so gentle that the heedless multitude never feel them, and on hearing you tell of them, they incredulously stare. That moor made no show of religion, but was a Quaker. We had but to stand still for five minutes or so, no easy matter then, for we were more restless than a wave, or to lie down with our ear to the ground, and the spirit was sure to move the old Quaker, who forthwith began to preach and pray and sing Psalms. How he moaned at times as if his heart were breaking! At times, as if some old forgotten sorrow were recalled, how he sighed! Then recovering his self-possession, as if to clear his voice, he gave a hem, and then a short nasty cough like a patient in a consumption. Now all was hush, and you might have supposed he had fallen

asleep, for in that hush you heard what seemed an intermitting snore. When all at once, whew, whew, whew, as if he were whistling, accompanied with a strange rushing sound as of diving wings. That was in the air—but instantly after you heard something odder still in the bog. And while wondering, and of your wonder finding no end, the ground, which a moment before had felt firm as a road, began to shrink, and sink, and hesitate, and hurry, and crumble, and mumble all around you, and close up to your very feet—the quagmires gurgling as if choked—and a subterranean voice distinctly articulating Oh! Oh! Oh!

We have heard of people who pretend not to believe in ghosts—geologists who know how the world was created; but will they explain that moor? And how happened it that only by nights and dark nights it was so haunted? Beneath a wakeful moon and unwinking stars it was silent as a frozen sea. You listened then, and heard but the grass growing, and beautiful grass it was, though it was called coarse, and made the sweetest-scented hay. What crowds of bum-bees' bykes—foggies—did the scythe not reveal as it heaped up the heavy swathes—three hundred stone to the acre—by guess—for there was neither weighing nor measuring there then-a-days, but all was in the lump—and there the rush-roped stacks stood all the winter through, that they might be near the "eerie outlan cattle," on places where cart-wheel never circled, nor axle-tree creaked—nor ever car of antique make trailed its low load along—for the horse would have been laired. We knew not then at

all—and now we but imperfectly know—the cause of the Beautiful. Then we believed the Beautiful to be wholly extern; something we had nothing to do with but to look at, and lo! it shone divinely there! Happy creed if false—for in it, with holiest reverence, we blamelessly adored the stars. There they were in millions as we thought—every one brighter than another, when by chance we happened to fix on any individual among them, that we might look through its face into its heart. All above gloriously glittering, all below a blank. Our body here, our spirit there—how mean our birth-place, our death-home how magnificent! "Fear God and keep his commandments," said a small still voice—and we felt that if He gave us strength to obey that law, we should live for ever beyond all those stars.

But were there no Lochs in our parish? Yea. Four. The Little Loch—the White Loch—the Black Loch—and the Brother Loch. Not a tree on the banks of any one of them—yet he had been a blockhead who called them bare. Had there been any need for trees, Nature would have sown them on hills she so dearly loved. Nor sheep nor cattle were ever heard to complain of those pastures. They bleated and they lowed as cheerily as the moorland birdies sang—and how cheerily that was nobody knew who had not often met the morning on the brae, and shaken hands with her the rosy-fingered like two familiar friends. No want of loun places there, in which the creatures could lie with wool or hair unruffled among surrounding storms. For the hills had been dropt from the hollow of His hand who "tempers the wind to

the shorn lamb"—and even high up, where you might see tempest-stricken stones—some of them like pillars—but placed not there by human art—there were cozy bields in wildest weather, and some into which the snow was never known to drift, green all the winter through—perennial nests. Such was the nature of the region where lay our Four Lochs. They were some quarter of a mile—some half mile—and some whole mile—not more—asunder; but there was no great height—and we have a hundred times climbed the highest—from which they could be all seen at once—so cannily were they embosomed, so needed not to be embowered.

The Little Loch was the rushiest and reediest little rascal that ever rustled, and he was on the very edge of the Moor. That he had fish we all persisted in believing, in spite of all the successless angling of all kinds that from time immemorial had assailed his sullen depths—but what a place for powheads! One continued bank of them—while yet they were but eyes in the spawn—encircled it instead of water lilies; and at "the season of the year," by throwing in a few stones you awoke a croaking that would have silenced a rookery. In the early part of the century a pike had been seen basking in the shallows, by eye-measurement about ten feet long—but fortunately he had never been hooked, or the consequences would have been fatal. We have seen the Little Loch alive with wild-ducks; but it was almost impossible by position to get a shot at them—and quite impossible, if you did, to get hold of the slain. Fro himself—the best dog that ever dived—was baffled by

the multiplicity of impediments and obstructions—and at last refused to take the water—sat down and howled in spiteful rage. Yet Imagination loved the Little Loch, and so did Hope. We have conquered it in sleep both with rod and gun—the weight of bag and basket has wakened us out of dreams of murder that never were realized—yet once, and once only, in it we caught an eel, which we skinned, and wore the shrivel for many a day round our ankle—nor is it a vain superstition—to preserve it from sprains. We are willing the Little Loch should be drained; but you would have to dig a fearsome trench, for it used to have no bottom. A party of us—six—ascertained that fact, by heaving into it a stone which six-and-thirty schoolboys of this degenerate age could not have lifted from its moss-bed—and though we watched for an hour not a bubble rose to the surface. It used sometimes to boil like a pot on breathless days, for events happening in foreign countries disturbed the spring, and the torments it suffered thousands of fathoms below, were manifested above in turbulence that would have drowned a schoolboy's skiff.

The White Loch—so called from the silver sand of its shores—had likewise its rushy and reedy bogs; but access to every part of the main body was unimpeded, and you waded into it, gradually deeper and deeper, with such a delightful descent, that up to the arm-pits and then to the chin, you could keep touching the sand with your big-toe, till you floated away off at the nail, out of your depth, without for a little while discovering that it was incumbent on you, for sake of your personal

safety, to take to regular swimming—and then how buoyant was the milk-warm water, without a wave but of your own creating, as the ripples went circling away before your breast or your breath! It was absolutely too clear—for without knitting your brows you could not see it on bright airless days—and wondered what had become of it—when all at once, as if it had been that very moment created out of nothing, there it was! endued with some novel beauty—for of all the lochs we ever knew—and to be so simple too—the White Loch had surely the greatest variety of expression—but all within the cheerful—for sadness was alien altogether from its spirit, and the gentle Mere for ever wore a smile. Swans—but that was but once—our own eyes had seen on it—and were they wild or were they tame swans, certain it is they were great and glorious and lovely creatures, and whiter than any snow. No house was within sight, and they had nothing to fear—nor did they look afraid—sailing in the centre of the loch—nor did we see them fly away—for we lay still on the hillside till in the twilight we should not have known what they were, and we left them there among the shadows seemingly asleep. In the morning they were gone, and perhaps making love in some foreign land.

The Black Loch was a strange misnomer for one so fair—for black we never saw him, except it might be for an hour or so before thunder. If he really was a loch of colour the original taint had been washed out of him, and he might have shown his face among the purest waters of Europe. But then he was deep; and know-

ing that, the natives had named him, in no unnatural confusion of ideas, the Black Loch. We have seen wild-duck eggs five fathoms down so distinctly that we could count them—and though that is not a bad dive we have brought them up, one in our mouth and one in each hand, the tenants of course dead—nor can we now conjecture what sank them there; but ornithologists see unaccountable sights, and they only who are not ornithologists disbelieve Audubon and Wilson. Two features had the Black Loch which gave it to our eyes a pre-eminence in beauty over the other three—a tongue of land that half-divided it, and never on hot days was without some cattle grouped on its very point, and in among the water—and a cliff on which, though it was not very lofty, a pair of falcons had their nest. Yet in misty weather, when its head was hidden, the shrill cry seemed to come from a great height. There were some ruins too—tradition said of some church or chapel—that had been ruins long before the establishment of the Protestant faith. But they were somewhat remote, and likewise somewhat imaginary, for stones are found lying strangely distributed, and those looked to our eyes not like such as builders use, but to have been dropped there most probably from the moon.

But the best beloved, if not the most beautiful, of them all was the Brother Loch. It mattered not what was his disposition or genius, every one of us boys, however different might be our other tastes, preferred it far beyond the rest, and for once that we visited any of

them we visited it twenty times, nor ever once left it with disappointed hopes of enjoyment. It was the nearest, and therefore most within our power, so that we could gallop to it on shank's naiggie, well on in the afternoon, and enjoy what seemed a long day of delight, swift as flew the hours, before evening-prayers. Yet was it remote enough to make us always feel that our race thither was not for every day—and we seldom returned home without an adventure. It was the largest too by far of the Four—and indeed its area would have held the waters of all the rest. Then there was a charm to our heart as well as our imagination in its name—for tradition assigned it on account of three brothers that perished in its waters—and the same name for the same reason belongs to many another loch—and to one pool on almost every river. But above all it was the Loch for angling, and we long kept to perch. What schools! Not that they were of a very large size—though pretty well—but hundreds all nearly the same size gladdened our hearts as they lay, at the close of our sport, in separate heaps on the greensward-shore, more beautiful out of all sight than your silver or golden fishes in a glass-vase, where one appears to be twenty, and the delusive voracity is all for a single crumb. No bait so killing as cowshairn-mawks, fresh from their native bed, scooped out with the thumb. He must have been a dear friend to whom in a scarcity, by the water-side, when the corks were dipping, we would have given a mawk. No pike. Therefore the trout were allowed to gain their natural size —and that seemed to be about five pounds—adolescents

not unfrequent swam two or three—and you seldom or never saw the smaller fry. But few were the days "good for the Brother Loch." Perch rarely failed you, for by perseverance you were sure to fall in with one circumnatatory school or other, and to do murderous work among them with the mawk, from the schoolmaster himself inclusive down to the little booby of the lowest form. Not so with Trout. We have angled ten hours a-day for half a-week (during the vacance), without ever getting a single rise, nor could even that be called bad sport, for we lived in momentary expectation, mingled with fear, of a monster. Better far from sunrise to sunset never to move a fin, than oh! me miserable! to hook a huge hero with shoulders like a hog—play him till he comes floating side up close to the shore, and then to feel the feckless fly leave his lip and begin gamboling in the air, while he wallops away back into his native element, and sinks utterly and for evermore into the dark profound. Life loses at such a moment all that makes life desirable—yet strange! the wretch lives on—and has not the heart to drown himself, as he wrings his hands and curses his lot and the day he was born. But, thank Heaven, that ghastly fit of fancy is gone by, and we imagine one of those dark, scowling, gusty, almost tempestuous days, "prime for the Brother Loch." No glare or glitter on the water, no reflection of fleecy clouds, but a black-blue undulating swell, at times turbulent—with now and then a breaking wave—that was the weather in which the giants fed, showing their backs like dolphins within a fathom of the shore, and sucking

in the red heckle among your very feet. Not an insect in the air, yet then the fly was all the rage. This is a mystery, for you could do nothing with the worm. Oh! that we had then known the science of the spinning minnow! But we were then but an apprentice—who are now Emeritus Grand Master. Yet at this distance of time —half a century and more—it is impious to repine. Gut was not always to be got; and on such days a three-haired snood did the business—for they were bold as lions, and rashly rushed on death. The gleam of the yellow-worsted body with star-y-pointed tail maddened them with desire—no dallying with the gay deceiver—they licked him in—they gorged him—and while satiating their passion got involved in inextricable fate. You have seen a single strong horse ploughing up hill. How he sets his brisket to it—and snuves along—as the furrows fall in beautiful regularity from the gliding share. So snuved along the Monarch of the Mere—or the heir-apparent—or heir-presumptive—or some other branch of the royal family—while our line kept steadily cutting the waves, and our rod enclosing some new segment of the sky.

But many another pastime we pursued upon those pastoral hills, for even angling has its due measure, and unless that be preserved, the passion wastes itself into lassitude, or waxes into disease. "I would not angle alway," thinks the wise boy—"off to some other game we altogether flew." Never were there such hills for hare and hounds. There couched many a pussey—and there Bob Howie's famous Tickler—the Grew of all

Grews—first stained his flues in the blood of the Fur. But there is no coursing between April and October—and during the intervening months we used to have many a hunt on foot, without dogs, after the leverets. We all belonged to the High School indeed, and here was its playground. Cricket we had then never heard of; but there was ample room and verge enough for foot-ball. Our prime delight, however, was the chase. We were all in perpetual training, and in such wind that there were no bellows to mend after a flight of miles. We circled the Lochs. Plashing through the marishes we strained winding up the hillsides, till on the cairn called a beacon that crowned the loftiest summit of the range, we stood and waved defiance to our pursuers scattered wide and far below, for 'twas a Deer Hunt. Then we became cavaliers. We caught the long-maned and long-tailed colts, and mounting bare-backed, with rush helmets and segg sabres charged the nowte till the stirks were scattered, and the lowing lord of herds himself taken captive, as he stood pawing in a nook with his nose to the ground and eyes of fire. That was the riding-school in which we learned to witch the world with noble horsemanship. We thus got confirmed in that fine, easy, unconstrained, natural seat, which we carried with us into the saddle when we were required to handle the bridle instead of the mane. 'Tis right to hold on by the knees, but equally so to hold on by the calves of the legs and the heels. The modern system of turning out the toes, and sticking out the legs as if they were cork or timber, is at once dangerous and ridiculous; hence

in our cavalry the men get unhorsed in every charge. On pony-back we used to make the soles of our feet smack together below the belly, for quadruped and biped were both unshod, and hoof needed no iron on that stoneless sward. But the biggest fun of all was to "grup the auld mare," and ride her sextuple, the tallest boy sitting on the neck, and the shortest on the rump with his face to the tail, and holding on by that fundamental feature by which the urchin tooled her along as by a tiller. How the silly foal whinnied, as with light-gathered steps he accompanied in circles his populous parent, and seemed almost to doubt her identity, till one by one we slipped off over her hurdies, and let him take a suck! But what comet is yon in the sky—"with fear of change perplexing mallards?" A Flying Dragon. Of many degrees is his tail, with a tuft like that of Taurus terrified by the sudden entrance of the Sun into his sign. Up goes Sandy Donald's rusty and rimless beaver as a messenger to the Celestial. He obeys, and stooping his head, descends with many diverse divings, and buries his beak in the earth. The feathered kite quails and is cowed by him of paper, and there is a scampering of cattle on a hundred hills.

The Brother Loch saw annually another sight, when on the Green-Brae was pitched a Tent—a snow-white Pyramid, gathering to itself all the sunshine. There lords and ladies, and knights and squires, celebrated Old May-day, and half the parish flocked to the Festival. The Earl of Eglintoun, and Sir Michael Shaw Stewart, and old Sir John of Polloc, and Pollock of that Ilk,

and other heads of illustrious houses, with their wives and daughters, a beautiful show, did not disdain them of low degree, but kept open table in the moor; and would you believe it, high-born youths and maidens ministered at the board to cottage lads and lasses, whose sunburnt faces hardly dared to smile, under awe of that courtesy —yet whenever they looked up there was happiness in their eyes. The young ladies were all arrayed in green; and after the feast, they took bows and arrows in their lily hands, and shot at a target in a style that would have gladdened the heart of Maid Marian—nay, of Robin himself;—and one surpassing bright—the Star of Ayr—she held a hawk on her wrist—a tercel gentle—after the fashion of the olden time; and ever as she moved her arm you heard the chiming of silver bells. And her brother—gay and gallant as Sir Tristrem—he blew his tasseled bugle—so sweet, so pure, so wild the music, that when he ceased to breathe, the far-off repeated echoes, faint and dim, you thought died away in heaven, like an angel's voice.

Was it not a Paragon of a Parish? But we have not told you one half of its charms. There was a charm in every nook—and Youth was the master of the spell. Small magicians were we in size, but we were great in might. We had but to open our eyes in the morning, and at one look all nature was beautiful. We have said nothing about the Burns. The chief was the Yearn —endearingly called the Humby, from a farm near the Manse, and belonging to the minister. Its chief source was, we believe, the Brother Loch. But it whimpled

with such an infantine voice from the lucid bay, which then knew nor sluice nor dam, that for a while it was scarcely even a rill, and you had to seek for it among the heather. In doing so, ten to one some brooding birdie fluttered off her nest—but not till your next step would have crushed them all—or perhaps—but he had no nest there—a snipe. There it is—betrayed by a line of livelier verdure. Erelong it sparkled within banks of its own and "braes of green bracken," and as you footed along, shoals of minnows, and perhaps a small trout or two, brastled away to the other side of the shallow, and hid themselves in the shadows. 'Tis a pretty rill now—nor any longer mute; and you hear it murmur. It has acquired confidence on its course, and has formed itself into its first pool—a waterfall, three feet high, with its own tiny rocks, and a single birk—no, it is a rowan—too young yet to bear berries—else might a child pluck the highest cluster. Imperceptibly, insensibly, it grows just like life. The Burn is now in his boyhood; and a bold, bright boy he is—dancing and singing—nor heeding which way he goes along the wild, any more than that wee rosy-cheeked, flaxen-headed girl seems to heed, who drops you a curtsy, and on being asked by you, with your hand on her hair, where she is going, answers wi' a soft Scottish accent—ah! how sweet—"owre the hill to see my Mither." Is that a house? No—a fauld. For this is the Washing-Pool. Look around you, and you never saw such perfectly white sheep. They are Cheviots; for the black-faces are on the higher hills to the north of the moor. We see a few rigs of flax—and "lint is in the

bell"—the steeping whereof will sadly annoy the bit burnie, but poor people must spin—and as this is not the season, we will think of nothing that can pollute his limpid waters. Symptoms of husbandry! Potato-shaws luxuriating on lazy beds, and a small field with alternate rigs of oats and barley. Yes, that is a house —"an auld clay bigging"—in such Robin Burns was born—in such was rocked the cradle of Pollok. We think we hear two separate liquid voices—and we are right—for from the flats beyond Floak, and away towards Kingswells, comes another yet wilder burnie, and they meet in one at the head of what you would probably call a meadow, but which we call a holm. There seems to be more arable land hereabouts than a stranger could have had any idea of; but it is a long time since the ploughshare traced those almost obliterated furrows on the hillside; and such cultivation is now wisely confined, you observe, to the lower lands. We fear the Yearn—for that is his name now—heretofore he was anonymous—is about to get flat. But we must not grudge him a slumber or a sleep among the saughs, lulled by the murmur of millions of humble bees—we speak within bounds—on their honied flowerage. We are confusing the seasons, for a few minutes ago we spoke of "lint being in the bell;" but in imagination's dream how sweetly do the seasons all slide into one another! After sleep comes play, and see and hear now how the merry Yearn goes tumbling over rocks, nor will rest in any one linn, but impatient of each beautiful prison in which one would think he might lie a willing

thrall, hurries on as if he were racing against time, nor casts a look at the human dwellings now more frequent near his sides. But he will be stopped by and by, whether he will or no; for there, if we be not much mistaken, there is a mill. But the wheel is at rest—the sluice on the lade is down—with the lade he has nothing more to do than to fill it; and with undiminished volume he wends round the miller's garden—you see Dusty Jacket is a florist—and now is hidden in a dell; but a dell without any rocks. 'Tis but some hundred yards across from bank to brae—and as you angle along on either side, the sheep and lambs are bleating high overhead; for though the braes are steep, they are all intersected with sheep-walks, and ever and anon among the broom and the brackens are little platforms of close-nibbled greensward, yet not bare—and nowhere else is the pasturage more succulent—nor do the young creatures not care to taste the primroses, though were they to live entirely upon them, they could not keep down the profusion—so thickly studded in places are the constellations—among sprinklings of single stars. Here the hill-blackbird builds—and here you know why Scotland is called the lintie's land. What bird lilts like the lintwhite? The lark alone. But here there are no larks—a little further down and you will hear one ascending or descending over almost every field of grass or of the tender braird. Down the dell before you, flitting from stone to stone, on short flight seeks the water-pyet—seemingly a witless creature with its bonnie white breast—to wile you away from the cre-

vice, even within the waterfall, that holds its young—or with a cock of her tail she dips and disappears. There is grace in the glancing sandpiper—nor, though somewhat fantastical, is the water-wagtail inelegant—either belle or beau—an outlandish bird that makes himself at home wherever he goes, and, vain as he looks, is contented if but one admire him in a solitary place—though it is true that we have seen them in half dozens on the midden in front of the cottage door. The blue slip of sky overhead has been gradually widening, and the dell is done. Is that snow? A bleachfield. Lasses can bleach their own linen on the green near the pool, "atween twa flowery braes," as Allan has so sweetly sung, in his truly Scottish pastoral the Gentle Shepherd. But even they could not well do without bleachfields on a larger scale, else dingy would be their smocks and their wedding-sheets. Therefore there is beauty in a bleachfield, and in none more than in Bell's-Meadows. But where is the Burn? They have stolen him out of his bed, and, alas! nothing but stones! Gather up your flies, and away down to yonder grove. There he is like one risen from the dead; and how joyful his resurrection! All the way from this down to the Brigg o' Humbie the angling is admirable, and the burn has become a stream. You wade now through longer grass —sometimes even up to the knees; and half-forgetting pastoral life, you ejaculate "Speed the plough!" Whitewashed houses—but still thatched—look down on you from among trees, that shelter them in front; while behind is an encampment of stacks, and on each side a

line of offices, so that they are snug in every wind that blows. The Auld Brigg is gone, which is a pity; for though the turn was perilous sharp, time had so coloured it, that in a sunny shower we have mistaken it for a rainbow. That's Humbie House, God bless it! and though we cannot here with our bodily sense see the Manse, with our spiritual eye we can see it any where. Ay! there is the cock on the Kirk-spire! The wind we see has shifted to the south; and ere we reach the Cart, we shall have to stuff our pockets. The Cart!—ay, the river Cart—not that on which pretty Paisley stands, but the Black Cart, beloved by us chiefly for sake of Cath-Cart Castle, which, when a collegian at Glasgow, we visited every Play-Friday, and deepened the ivy on its walls with our first sombre dreams. The scenery of the Yearn becomes even silvan now; and though still sweet it murmurs to our ear, they no longer sink into our hearts. So let it mingle with the Cart, and the Cart with the Clyde, and the Clyde widen away in all his majesty, till the river becomes a firth, and the firth the sea;—but we shut our eyes, and relapse into the vision that showed us the solitary region dearest to our imagination and our hearts, and opening them on completion of the charm that works within the spirit when no daylight is there, rejoice to find ourselves again sole-sitting on the Green-Brae above the Brother Loch.

Such is an off-hand picture of Our Parish—pray, give us one of yours, that both may gain by comparison. But is ours a true picture? True as Holy Writ—false

as any fiction in an Arabian tale. How is this? Perception, memory, imagination, are all modes—states of mind. But mind, as we said before, is one substance, and matter another; and mind never deals with matter without metamorphosing it like a mythologist. Thus truth and falsehood, reality and fiction, become all one and the same; for they are so essentially blended, that we defy you to show what is biblical—what apocryphal—and what pure romance. How we transpose and dislocate while we limn in aerial colours! Where tree never grew we drop it down centuries old—or we tear out the gnarled oak by the roots, and steep what was once his shadow in sunshine—hills sink at a touch, or at a beck mountains rise; yet amidst all those fluctuations the spirit of the place remains the same; for in that spirit has imagination all along been working, and boon nature smiles on her son as he imitates her creations—but "hers are heavenly, his an empty dream."

Where lies Our Parish, and what is its name? Seek, and you will find it either in Renfrewshire, or in Utopia, or in the Moon. As for its name, men call it the Mearns. M'Culloch, the great Glasgow painter—and in Scotland he has no superior—will perhaps accompany you to what once was the Moor. All the Four Lochs, we understand, are there still; but the Little Loch transmogrified into an auxiliar appurtenance to some cursed Wark—the Brother Loch much exhausted by daily drains upon him by we know not what wretch—the White Loch *larched*—and the Black Loch of a

ghastly blue, cruelly cultivated all close round the brim. From his moor

"The parting genius is with sighing sent;"

but sometimes, on blear-eyed days, he is seen disconsolately sitting in some yet mossy spot among the ruins of his ancient reign. That painter has studied the aspect of the Old Forlorn, and has shown it more than once on bits of canvass not a foot long; and such pictures will survive after the Ghost of the Genius has bade farewell to the ruined solitudes he had haunted ever since the flood, or been laid beneath the yet unprofaned Green-Brae, above the Brother Loch, whence we devoutly trust he will reissue, though ages may have to elapse, to see all his quagmires in their primeval glory, and all his hags more hideously beautiful, as they yawn back again into their former selves, frowning over the burial in their bottoms of all the harvests that had dared to ripen above their heads.

MAY-DAY.

ART thou beautiful, as of old, O wild, moorland, silvan, and pastoral Parish! the Paradise in which our spirit dwelt beneath the glorious dawning of life—can it be, beloved world of boyhood, that thou art indeed beautiful as of old? Though round and round thy boundaries in half an hour could fly the flapping dove—though the martens, wheeling to and fro that ivied and wall-flowered ruin of a Castle, central in its own domain, seem in their more distant flight to glance their crescent wings over a vale rejoicing apart in another kirk-spire, yet how rich in streams, and rivulets, and rills, each with its own peculiar murmur—art Thou with thy bold bleak exposure, sloping upwards in ever lustrous undulations to the portals of the East? How endless the interchange of woods and meadows, glens, dells, and broomy nooks, without number, among thy banks and braes! And then of human dwellings—how rises the smoke, ever and anon, into the sky, all neighbouring on each other, so that the cock-crow is heard from homestead to homestead—while as you wander onwards, each

roof still rises unexpectedly—and as solitary, as if it had been far remote. Fairest of Scotland's thousand parishes—neither Highland, nor Lowland—but undulating—let us again use the descriptive word—like the sea in sunset after a day of storms—yes, Heaven's blessing be upon thee! Thou art indeed beautiful as of old!

The same heavens! More blue than any colour that tinges the flowers of earth—like the violet veins of a virgin's bosom. The stillness of those lofty clouds makes them seem whiter than the snow. Return, O lark! to thy grassy nest, in the furrow of the green brairded corn, for thy brooding mate can no longer hear thee soaring in the sky. Methinks there is little or no change on these coppice-woods, with their full budding branches all impatient for the spring. Yet twice have axe and bill-hook levelled them with the mossy stones, since among the broomy and briery knolls we sought the grey linnet's nest, or wondered to spy, among the rustling leaves, the robin-redbreast, seemingly forgetful of his winter benefactor, man. Surely there were trees here in former times, that now are gone—tall, far-spreading single trees, in whose shade used to lie the ruminating cattle, with the small herd-girl asleep. Gone are they, and dimly remembered as the uncertain shadows of dreams; yet not more forgotten than some living beings with whom our infancy and boyhood held converse—whose voices, laughter, eyes, forehead—hands so often grasped—arms linked in ours, as we danced along the braes—have long ceased to

be more than images and echoes, incapable of commanding so much as one single tear. Alas! for the treachery of memory to all the holiest human affections, when beguiled by the slow but sure sorcery of time.

It is MAY-DAY, and we shall be happy as the season. What although some sad and solemn thoughts come suddenly across us, the day is not at nightfall felt to have been the less delightful, because shadows now and then bedimmed it, and moments almost mournful, of an unhymning hush, took possession of field or forest. We are all alone—a solitary pedestrian; and obeying the fine impulses of a will, whose motives are changeable as the cameleon's hues, our feet shall bear us glancingly along to the merry music of streams—or linger by the silent shores of lochs—or upon the hill-summit pause, ourselves the only spectator of a panorama painted by Spring, for our sole delight—or plunge into the old wood's magnificent exclusion from sky—where at midsummer, day is as night—though not so now, for this is the season of buds and blossoms; and the cushat's nest is yet visible on the half-leafed boughs, and the sunshine streams in upon the ground-flowers, that in another month will be cold and pale in the forest gloom, almost as those that bedeck the dead when the vault-door is closed and all is silence.

What! shall we linger here within a little mile of the MANSE, wherein and among its pleasant bounds our boyish life glided murmuring away, like a stream that never, till it leaves its native hills, knows taint or pollution, and not hasten on to the dell, in which nest-like it

is built, and guarded by some wonderful felicity of situation equally against all the winds? No. Thither as yet have we not courage to direct our footsteps—for that venerable Man has long been dead—not one of his ancient household now remains on earth. There the change, though it was gradual and unpainful, according to the gentlest laws of nature, has been entire and complete. The "old familiar faces" we can dream of, but never more shall see—and the voices that are now heard within those walls, what can they ever be to us, when we would fain listen in the silence of our spirit to the echoes of departed years? It is an appalling trial to approach a place where once we have been happier—happier far than ever we can be on this earth again; and a worse evil doth it seem to our imagination to return to Paradise, with a changed and saddened heart, than at first to be driven from it into the outer world, if still permitted to carry thither something of that spirit that had glorified our prime.

But yonder, we see, yet towers the Sycamore on the crown of the hill—the first great Tree in the parish that used to get green; for stony as seems the hard glebe, constricted by its bare and gnarled roots, they draw sustenance from afar; and not another knoll on which the sun so delights to pour his beams. Weeks before any other Sycamore, and almost as early as the alder or the birch—the GLORY OF MOUNT PLEASANT, for so we schoolboys called it, unfolded itself like a banner. You could then see only the low windows of the dwelling—for eaves, roof, and chimneys all disappeared—and then,

when you stood beneath, was not the sound of the bees like the very sound of the sea itself, continuous, unabating, all day long unto evening, when, as if the tide of life had ebbed, there was a perfect silence!

MOUNT PLEASANT! well indeed dost thou deserve the name, bestowed on thee perhaps long ago, not by any one of the humble proprietors, but by the general voice of praise, all eyes being won by thy cheerful beauty. For from that shaded platform, what a sweet vision of fields and meadows, knolls, braes, and hills, uncertain gleamings of a river, the smoke of many houses, and glittering perhaps in the sunshine, the spire of the House of God! To have seen Adam Morrison, the Elder, sitting with his solemn, his austere Sabbath-face, beneath the pulpit, with his expressive eyes fixed on the Preacher, you could not but have judged him to be a man of a stern character and austere demeanour. To have seen him at labour on the working-days, you might almost have thought him the serf of some tyrant-lord, for into all the toils of the field he carried the force of a mind that would suffer nothing to be undone that strength and skill could achieve; but within the humble porch of his own house, beside his own board, and his own fireside, he was a man to be kindly esteemed by his guests, by his own family tenderly and reverently beloved. His wife was the comeliest matron in the parish, a woman of active habits and a strong mind, but tempering the natural sternness of her husband's character with that genial and jocund cheerfulness, that of all the lesser virtues is the most efficient to the happiness of a

household. One daughter only had they, and we could charm our heart even now, by evoking the vanished from oblivion, and imaging her over and over again in the light of words; but although all objects, animate and inanimate, seem always tinged with an air of sadness when they are past—and as at present we are resolved to be cheerful—obstinately to resist all access of melancholy—an enemy to the pathetic—and a scorner of shedders of tears—therefore let Mary Morrison rest in her grave, and let us paint a pleasant picture of a May-Day afternoon, and enjoy it as it was enjoyed of old, beneath that stately Sycamore, with the grandisonant name of THE GLORY OF MOUNT PLEASANT.

There, under the murmuring shadow round and round that noble stem, used on MAY-DAY to be fitted a somewhat fantastic board, all deftly arrayed in home-spun drapery, white as the patches of unmelted snow on the distant mountain-head; and on various seats—stumps, stones, stools, creepies, forms, chairs, armless and with no spine, or high-backed and elbowed, and the carving-work thereof most intricate and allegorical—took their places, after much formal ceremony of scraping and bowing, blushing and curtsying, old, young, and middle-aged, of high and low degree, till in one moment all were hushed by the Minister shutting his eyes, and holding up his hand to ask a blessing. And "well worthy of a grace as lang's a tether," was the MAY-DAY meal spread beneath the shadow of the GLORY OF MOUNT PLEASANT. But the Minister uttered only a few fervent sentences, and then we all fell to the curds

and cream. What smooth, pure, bright burnished beauty on those horn-spoons! How apt to the hand the stalk —to the mouth how apt the bowl! Each guest drew closer to his breast the deep broth-plate of delft, rather more than full of curds, many million times more deliciously desirable even than blanc-mange, and then filled to overflowing with a blessed outpouring of creamy richness that tenaciously descended from an enormous jug, the peculiar expression of whose physiognomy, particularly the nose, we will carry with us to the grave! The dairy at MOUNT PLEASANT consisted of twenty cows—almost all spring calvers, and of the Ayrshire breed—so you may guess what cream! The spoon could not stand in it—it was not so thick as that—for that was too thick—but the spoon when placed upright in it, retained its perpendicularity for a while, and then, when uncertain on which side to fall, was grasped by the hand of hungry schoolboy, and steered with its fresh and fragrant freight into a mouth already open in wonder. Never beneath the sun, moon, and stars, were such oatmeal-cakes, peas-scones, and barley-bannocks, as at MOUNT PLEASANT. You could have eaten away at them with pleasure, even although not hungry—and yet it was impossible of them to eat too much—Manna that they were!! Seldom indeed is butter yellow on May-day. But the butter of the gudewife of Mount Pleasant —such, and so rich was the old lea-pasture—was coloured like the crocus, before the young thrushes had left the nest in the honey-suckled corner of the gavel-end. Not a single hair in the churn. Then what honey

and what jam! The first, not heather, for that is too luscious, especially after such cream, but the pure white virgin honey, like dew shaken from clover, but now *querny* after winter keep; and oh! over a layer of such butter on such barley bannocks was such honey, on such a day, in such company, and to such palates, too divine to be described by such a pen as that now wielded by such a writer! The Jam! It was of gooseberries—the small black hairy ones—gathered to a very minute from the bush, and boiled to a very moment in the pan! A bannock studded with some dozen or two of such grozets was more beautiful than a corresponding expanse of heaven adorned with as many stars. The question, with the gawsy and generous gude-wife of Mount Pleasant, was not—"My dear laddie, which will ye hae—hinny or jam?" but, "Which will ye hae first?" The honey, we well remember, was in two huge brown jugs, or jars, or crocks; the jam, in half a dozen white cans of more moderate dimensions, from whose mouths a veil of thin transparent paper was withdrawn, while, like a steam of rich distilled perfumes, rose a fruity fragrance, that blended with the vernal balminess of the humming Sycamore. There the bees were all at work for next May-day, happy as ever bees were on Hybla itself; and gone now though be the age of gold, happy as Arcadians were we, nor wanted our festal-day or pipe or song; for to the breath of Harry Wilton, the young English boy, the flute gave forth tones almost as liquid sweet as those that flowed from the lips of Mary Morrison herself, who alone, of all

singers in hut or hall that ever drew tears, left nothing for the heart or the imagination to desire in any one of Scotland's ancient melodies.

Never had Mary Morrison heard the old ballad-airs sung, except during the mid-day hour of rest, in the corn or hay field—and rude singers are they all—whether male or female voices—although sometimes with a touch of natural pathos that finds its way to the heart. But as the nightingale would sing truly its own variegated song, although it never were to hear any one of its own kind warbling from among the shrub-roots, and the lark though alone on earth, would sing the hymn well known at the gate of heaven, so all untaught but by the nature within her, and inspired by her own delightful genius alone, did Mary Morrison feel all the measures of those ancient melodies, and give them all an expression at once simple and profound. People who said they did not care about music, especially Scottish music, it was so monotonous and insipid, laid aside their indifferent looks before three notes of the simplest air had left Mary Morrison's lips, as she sat faintly blushing, less in bashfulness than in her own emotion, with her little hands playing perhaps with flowers, and her eyes fixed on the ground, or raised, ever and anon, to the roof. "In all common things," would most people say, "she is but a very ordinary girl—but her musical turn is really very singular indeed;"—but her happy father and mother knew, that in all common things—that is, in all the duties of an humble and innocent life, their Mary was by nature excellent as in the melodies and

harmonies of song—and that while her voice in the evening-psalm was as angel's sweet, so was her spirit almost pure as an angel's, and nearly inexperienced of sin.

Proud, indeed, were her parents on that May-day to look upon her—and to listen to her—as their Mary sat beside the young English boy—admired of all observers—and happier than she had ever been in this world before, in the charm of their blended music, and the unconscious affection—sisterly, yet more than sisterly, for brother she had none—that towards one so kind and noble was yearning at her heart.

Beautiful were they both; and when they sat side by side in their music, insensible must that heart have been by whom they were not both admired and beloved. It was thought that they loved one another too, too well; for Harry Wilton was the grandson of an English Peer, and Mary Morrison a peasant's child; but they could not love too well—she in her tenderness—he in his passion—for, with them, life and love was a delightful dream, out of which they were never to be awakened. For as by some secret sympathy, both sickened on the same day—of the same fever—and died at the same hour;—and not from any dim intention of those who buried them, but accidentally, and because the burial-ground of the Minister and the Elder adjoined, were they buried almost in the same grave—for not half a yard of daisied turf divided them—a curtain between the beds on which brother and sister slept.

In their delirium they both talked about each other

—Mary Morrison and Harry Wilton—yet their words were not words of love, only of common kindness; for although on their death-beds they did not talk about death, but frequently about that May-day Festival, and other pleasant meetings in neighbours' houses, or in the Manse. Mary sometimes rose up in bed, and in imagination joined her voice to that of the flute which to his lips was to breathe no more; and even at the very self-same moment—so it wonderfully was—did he tell all to be hushed, for that Mary Morrison was about to sing the Flowers of the Forest.

Methinks that no deep impressions of the past, although haply they may sleep for ever, and seem as if they had ceased to be, are ever utterly obliterated; but that they may, one and all, reappear at some hour or other however distant, legible as at the very moment they were first engraven on the memory. Not by the power of meditation are the long ago vanished thoughts or emotions restored to us, in which we found delight or disturbance; but of themselves do they seem to arise, not undesired indeed, but unbidden, like sea-birds that come unexpectedly floating up into some inland vale, because, unknown to us who wonder at them, the tide is flowing and the breezes blow from the main. Bright as the living image stands now before us the ghost—for what else is it than the ghost—of Mary Morrison, just as she stood before us on one particular day—in one particular place, innumerable years ago! It was at the close of one of those midsummer days which melt away into twilight, rather than into night, although the stars are

visible, and bird and beast asleep. All by herself, as she walked along between the braes, was she singing a hymn—

> And must this body die ?
> This mortal frame decay ?
> And must these feeble limbs of mine
> Lie mouldering in the clay ?

Not that the child had any thought of death, for she was as full of life as the star above her was of lustre—tamed though they both were by the holy hour. At our bidding she renewed the strain that had ceased as we met, and continued to sing it while we parted, her voice dying away in the distance, like an angel's from a broken dream. Never heard we that voice again, for in three little weeks it had gone, to be extinguished no more, to join the heavenly choirs at the feet of the Redeemer.

Did both her parents lose all love to life, when their sole daughter was taken away? And did they die finally of broken hearts? No—such is not the natural working of the human spirit, if kept in repair by pure and pious thought. Never were they so happy indeed as they had once been—nor was their happiness of the same kind. Oh! different far in resignation that often wept when it did not repine—in faith that now held a tenderer commerce with the skies! Smiles were not very long of being again seen at Mount Pleasant. An orphan cousin of Mary's—they had been as sisters—took her place, and filled it too, as far as the living can ever fill the place of the dead. Common cares continued for a while to occupy the Elder and his wife, for there were not a few to whom their substance was to be a blessing.

Ordinary observers could not have discerned any abatement of his activities in field or market; but others saw that the toil to him was now but a duty that had formerly been a delight. Mount Pleasant was let to a relative, and the Morrisons retired to a small house, with a garden, a few hundred yards from the kirk. Let him be strong as a giant, infirmities often come on the hard-working man before you can well call him old. It was so with Adam Morrison. He broke down fast, we have been told, in his sixtieth year, and after that partook but of one sacrament. Not in tales of fiction alone do those who have long loved and well, lay themselves down and die in each other's arms. Such happy deaths are recorded on humble tombstones; and there is one on which this inscription may be read—"HERE LIE THE BODIES OF ADAM MORRISON AND OF HELEN ARMOUR HIS SPOUSE. THEY DIED ON THE 1ST OF MAY 17—. HERE ALSO LIES THE BODY OF THEIR DAUGHTER, MARY MORRISON, WHO DIED JUNE 2, 17—." The headstone is a granite slab—as they almost all are in that kirkyard—and the kirk itself is of the same enduring material. But touching that grave is a Marble Monument, white almost as the very snow, and, in the midst of the emblazonry of death, adorned with the armorial bearings belonging to a family of the high-born.

Sworn Brother of our soul! during the bright ardours of boyhood, when the present was all-sufficient in its own bliss, the past soon forgotten, and the future unfeared, what might have been thy lot, beloved Harry Wilton, had thy span of life been prolonged to this very

day? Better—oh! far better was it for thee and thine that thou didst so early die; for it seemeth that a curse is on that lofty lineage; and that, with all their genius, accomplishments, and virtues, dishonour comes and goes, a familiar and privileged guest, out and in their house. Shame never veiled the light of those bold eyes, nor tamed the eloquence of those sunny lips, nor ever for a single moment bowed down that young princely head that, like a fast-growing flower, seemed each successive morning to be visibly rising up towards a stately manhood. But the time was not far distant, when to thee life would have undergone a rueful transformation. Thy father, expatriated by the spells of a sorceress, and forced into foreign countries, to associate with vice, worthlessness, profligacy, and crime! Thy mother, dead of a broken heart! And that lovely sister, who came to the Manse with her jewelled hair—But all these miserable things who could prophesy, at the hour when we and the weeping villagers laid thee, apart from the palace and the burial-vault of thy high-born ancestors, without anthem or organ-peal, among the humble dead? Needless and foolish were all those floods of tears. In thy brief and beautiful course, nothing have we who loved thee to lament or condemn. In few memories, indeed, doth thy image now survive; for in process of time what young face fadeth not away from eyes busied with the shows of this living world? What young voice is not bedumbed to ears for ever filled with its perplexing din? Yet thou, Nature, on this glorious May-day, rejoicing in all the plenitude of thy bliss—we

call upon thee to bear witness to the intensity of our never-dying grief! Ye fields, that long ago we so often trode together, with the wind-swept shadows hovering about our path—Ye streams, whose murmur awoke our imaginations, as we lay reading, or musing together in day-dreams, among the broomy braes—Ye woods, where we started at the startled cushat, or paused, without a word, to hear the creature's solitary moans and murmurs deepening the far-off hush, already so profound—Ye moors and mosses, black yet beautiful, with your peat-trenches overshadowed by the heather-blossoms that scented the wilderness afar—where the little maiden, sent from the shieling on errands to town or village in the country below, seemed, as we met her in the sunshine, to rise up before us for our delight, like a fairy from the desert bloom—Thou loch, remote in thy treeless solitude, and with nought reflected in thy many-springed waters but those low pastoral hills of excessive green, and the white-barred blue of heaven—no creature on its shores but our own selves, keenly angling in the breezes, or lying in the shaded sunshine, with some book of old ballads, or strain of some Immortal yet alive on earth—one and all, bear witness to our undying affection, that silently now feeds on grief! And, oh! what overflowing thoughts did that shout of ours now awaken from the hanging tower of the Old Castle—"Wilton, Wilton!" The name of the long-ago buried faintly and afar-off repeated by an echo!

A pensive shade has fallen across MAY-DAY; and while the sun is behind those castellated clouds, our

imagination is willing to retire into the saddest places of memory, and gather together stories and tales of tears. And many such there are, annually sprinkled all round the humble huts of our imaginative and religious land, even like the wild-flowers that, in endless succession, disappearing and reappearing in their beauty, Spring drops down upon every brae. And as ofttimes some one particular tune, some one pathetic but imperfect and fragmentary part of an old melody, will nearly touch the heart, when it is dead to the finest and most finished strain; so now a faint and dim tradition comes upon us, giving birth to uncertain and mysterious thoughts. It is an old Tradition. They were called the BLESSED FAMILY! Far up at the head of yonder glen of old was their dwelling, and in their garden sparkled the translucent well that is the source of the stream that animates the parish with a hundred waterfalls. Father, mother, and daughter—it was hard to say which of the three was the most beloved! Yet they were not native here, but brought with them, from some distant place, the soft and silvery accents of the pure English tongue, and manners most gracious in their serene simplicity; while over a life composed of acts of charity was spread a stillness that nothing ever disturbed—the stillness of a thoughtful pity for human sins and sorrows, yet not unwilling to be moved to smiles by the breath of joy. In those days the very heart of Scotland was distracted—persecution scattered her prayers—and during the summer months, families remained shut up in fear within their huts, as if the snowdrifts of winter had

blocked up and buried their doors. It was as if the shadow of a thunder-cloud hung over all the land, so that men's hearts quaked as they looked up to heaven — when, lo! all at once, Three gracious Visitants appeared! Imagination invested their foreheads with a halo; and as they walked on their missions of mercy, exclaimed—How beautiful are their feet! Few words was the Child ever heard to speak, except some words of prayer; but her image-like stillness breathed a blessing wherever it smiled, and all the little maidens loved her, when hushed almost into awe by her spiritual beauty, as she knelt with them in their morning and evening orisons. The Mother's face, too, it is said, was pale as a face of grief, while her eyes seemed always happy, and a tone of thanksgiving was in her voice. Her Husband leant upon her on his way to the grave—for his eye's excessive brightness glittered with death—and often, as he prayed beside the sick-bed, his cheek became like ashes, for his heart in a moment ceased to beat, and then, as if about to burst in agony, sounded audibly in the silence. Journeying on did they all seem to heaven; yet as they were passing by, how loving and how full of mercy! To them belonged some blessed power to wave away the sword that would fain have smitten the Saints. The dewdrops on the greensward before the cottage-door, they suffered not to be polluted with blood. Guardian Angels were they thought to be, and such indeed they were, for what else are the holy powers of innocence?—Guardian Angels sent to save some of God's servants on earth from the choking tide

and the scorching fire. Often, in the clear and starry nights, did the dwellers among all these little dells, and up along all these low hillsides, hear music flowing down from heaven, responsive to the hymns of the Blessed Family. Music without the syllabling of words—yet breathing worship, and with the spirit of piety filling all the Night-Heavens. One whole day and night passed by, and not a hut had been enlightened by their presence. Perhaps they had gone away without warning as they had come—having been sent on another mission. With soft steps one maiden, and then another entered the door, and then was heard the voice of weeping and of loud lament. The three lay, side by side, with their pale faces up to heaven. Dora, for that is the name tradition has handed down—Dorothea, the gift of God, lay between her Father and her Mother, and all their hands were lovingly and peacefully entwined. No agonies had been there—unknown what hand, human or divine, had closed their eyelids and composed their limbs; but there they lay as if asleep, not to be awakened by the burst of sunshine that dazzled upon their smiling countenances, cheek to cheek, in the awful beauty of united death.

The deep religion of that troubled time had sanctified the Strangers almost into an angelic character; and when the little kirk-bells were again heard tinkling through the air of peace, (the number of the martyrs being complete,) the beauty with which their living foreheads had been invested, reappeared to the eyes of imagination, as the Poets whom Nature kept to herself

walked along the moonlight hills. "The Blessed Family," which had been as a household word, appertaining to them while they lived, now when centuries have gone by, is still full of a dim but divine meaning; the spirit of the tradition having remained, while its framework has almost fallen into decay.

How beautifully emerges that sun-stricken Cottage from the rocks, that all around it are floating in a blue vapoury light! Were we so disposed, methinks we could easily write a little book entirely about the obscure people that have lived and died about that farm, by name LOGAN BRAES. Neither is it without its old traditions. One May-day long ago—some two centuries since—that rural festival was there interrupted by a thunder-storm, and the party of youths and maidens, driven from the budding arbours, were all assembled in the ample kitchen. The house seemed to be in the very heart of the thunder; and the master began to read, without declaring it to be a religious service, a chapter of the Bible; but the frequent flashes of lightning so blinded him, that he was forced to lay down the Book, and all then sat still without speaking a word; many with pale faces, and none without a mingled sense of awe and fear. The maiden forgot her bashfulness as the rattling peals shook the roof-tree, and hid her face in her lover's bosom; the children crept closer and closer, each to some protecting knee, and the dogs came all into the house, and lay down in dark places. Now and then there was a convulsive, irrepressible, but half-stifled shriek—some sobbed—and a loud hysterical laugh

from one overcome with terror sounded ghastly between the deepest of all dread repose—that which separates one peal from another, when the flash and the roar are as one, and the thick air smells of sulphur. The body feels its mortal nature, and shrinks as if about to be withered into nothing. Now the muttering thunder seems to have changed its place to some distant cloud—now, as if returning to blast those whom it had spared, waxes louder and fiercer than before—till the Great Tree that shelters the house is shivered with a noise like the masts of a ship carried away by the board. "Look, father, look—see yonder is an Angel all in white, descending from heaven!" said little Alice, who had already been almost in the attitude of prayer, and now clasped her hands together, and steadfastly, and without fear of the lightning, eyed the sky. "One of God's Holy Angels—one of those who sing before the Lamb!" And with an inspired rapture the fair child sprung to her feet. "See ye her not—see ye her not—father—mother? Lo! she beckons to me with a palm in her hand, like one of the palms in that picture in our Bible, when our Saviour is entering into Jerusalem! There she comes, nearer and nearer the earth—Oh! pity, forgive, and have mercy on me, thou most beautiful of all the Angels—even for His name's sake." All eyes were turned towards the black heavens, and then to the raving child. Her mother clasped her to her bosom, afraid that terror had turned her brain—and her father going to the door, surveyed an ampler space of the sky. She flew to his side, and clinging to him again,

exclaimed in a wild outcry, "On her forehead a star! on her forehead a star! And oh! on what lovely wings she is floating away, away into eternity! The Angel, Father, is calling me by my Christian name, and I must no more abide on earth; but, touching the hem of her garment, be wafted away to heaven!" Sudden as a bird let loose from the hand, darted the maiden from her father's bosom, and with her face upward to the skies, pursued her flight. Young and old left the house, and at that moment the forked lightning came from the crashing cloud, and struck the whole tenement into ruins. Not a hair on any head was singed; and with one accord the people fell down upon their knees. From the eyes of the child, the Angel, or Vision of the Angel, had disappeared; but on her return to heaven, the Celestial heard the hymn that rose from those that were saved, and above all the voices, the small sweet silvery voice of her whose eyes alone were worthy of beholding a Saint Transfigured.

For several hundred years has that farm belonged to the family of the Logans, nor has son or daughter ever stained the name—while some have imparted to it, in its humble annals, what well may be called lustre. Many a time have we stood when a boy, all alone, beginning to be disturbed by the record of heroic or holy lives, in the kirkyard, beside the GRAVE OF THE MARTYRS—the grave in which Christian and Hannah Logan, mother and daughter, were interred. Many a time have we listened to the story of their deaths, from the lips of one who well knew how to stir the hearts of the young, till

" from their eyes they wiped the tears that sacred pity had engendered." Nearly a hundred years old was she that eloquent narrator—the Minister's mother—yet she could hear a whisper, and read the Bible without spectacles—although we sometimes used to suspect her of pretending to be reading off the Book, when, in fact, she was reciting from memory. The old lady often took a walk in the kirkyard—and being of a pleasant and cheerful nature, though in religious principle inflexibly austere, many were the most amusing anecdotes that she related to us and our compeers, all huddled round her, " where heaved the turf in many a mouldering heap." But the evening converse was always sure to have a serious termination—and the venerable matron could not be more willing to tell, than we to hear again and again, were it for the twentieth repetition, some old tragic event that gathered a deeper interest from every recital, as if on each we became better acquainted with the characters of those to whom it had befallen, till the chasm that time had dug between them and us disappeared, and we felt for the while that their happiness or misery and ours were essentially interdependent. At first she used, we well remember, to fix her solemn spirit-like eyes on our faces, to mark the different effects her story produced on her hearers; but erelong she became possessed wholly by the pathos of her own narrative, and with fluctuating features and earnest action of head and hands, poured forth her eloquence, as if soliloquizing among the tombs.

" Ay, ay, my dear boys, that is the grave o' the Mar-

tyrs. My father saw them die. The tide o' the far-ebbed sea was again beginning to flow, but the sands o' the bay o' death lay sae dry, that there were but few spots where a bairn could hae wat its feet. Thousands and tens o' thousands were standing a' roun' the edge of the bay—that was in shape just like that moon—and then twa stakes were driven deep into the sand, that the waves o' the returning sea micht na loosen them—and my father, who was but a boy like ane o' yourselves noo, waes me, didna he see wi' his ain een Christian Logan, and her wee dochter Hannah, for she was but eleven years auld—hurried alang by the enemies o' the Lord, and tied to their accursed stakes within the power o' the sea. He who holds the waters in the hollow o' his hand, thocht my father, will not suffer them to choke the prayer within those holy lips—but what kent he o' the dreadfu' judgments o' the Almighty? Dreadfu' as those judgments seemed to be, o' a' that crowd o' mortal creatures there were but only twa that drew their breath without a shudder—and these twa were Christian Logan and her beautifu' wee dochter Hannah, wi' her rosy cheeks, for they blanched not in that last extremity, her blue een, and her gouden hair, that glittered like a star in the darkness o' that dismal day. 'Mother, be not afraid,' she was heard to say, when the foam o' the first wave broke about their feet—and just as these words were uttered, all the great black clouds melted away from the sky, and the sun shone forth in the firmament like the all-seeing eye of God. The martyrs turned their faces a little towards one another, for the cords

could not wholly hinder them, and wi' voices as steady and as clear as ever they sang the psalm within the walls o' that kirk, did they, while the sea was mounting up—up from knee—waist—breast—neck—chin—lip—sing praises and thanksgivings unto God. As soon as Hannah's voice was drowned, it seemed as if her mother, before the water reached her own lips, bowed and gave up the ghost. While the people were all gazing, the heads of both martyrs disappeared, and nothing then was to be seen on the face o' the waters, but here and there a bit white breaking wave or silly sea-bird floating on the flow o' the tide into the bay. Back and back had aye fallen the people, as the tide was roarin' on wi' a hollow soun'—and now that the water was high aboon the heads o' the martyrs, what chained that dismal congregation to the sea-shore? It was the countenance o' a man that had suddenly come down frae his hiding-place amang the moors—and who now knew that his wife and daughter were bound to stakes deep down in the waters o' the very bay that his eyes beheld rolling, and his ears heard roaring—all the while that there was a God in heaven! Naebody could speak to him—although they all beseeched their Maker to have compassion upon him, and not to let his heart break and his reason fail. 'The stakes! the stakes! O Jesus! point out to me, with thy own scarred hand, the place where my wife and daughter are bound to the stakes—and I may yet bear them up out of the sand, and bring the bodies ashore—to be restored to life! O brethren, brethren!—said ye that my Chris-

tian and my Hannah have been for an hour below the sea? And was it from fear of fifty armed men, that so many thousand fathers and mothers, and sons and daughters, and brothers and sisters, rescued them not from such cruel, cruel death?' After uttering mony mair siclike raving words, he suddenly plunged into the sea, and, being a strong swimmer, was soon far out into the bay—and led by some desperate instinct to the very place where the stakes were fixed in the sand. Perfectly resigned had the martyrs been to their doom—but in the agonies o' that horrible death, there had been some struggles o' the mortal body, and the weight o' the waters had borne down the stakes, so that, just as if they had been lashed to a spar to enable them to escape from shipwreck, baith the bodies came floatin' to the surface, and his hand grasped, without knowing it, his ain Hannah's gowden hair—sarely defiled, ye may weel think, wi' the sand—baith their faces changed frae what they ance were by the wrench o' death. Father, mother, and daughter came a'thegither to the shore—and there was a cry went far and wide, up even to the hiding-places o' the faithfu' among the hags and cleuchs i' the moors, that the sea had given up the living, and that the martyrs were triumphant, even in this world, over the powers o' Sin and o' Death. Yea, they were indeed triumphant;—and well might the faithfu' sing aloud in the desert, 'O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?' for these three bodies were but as the weeds on which they lay stretched out to the pitying gaze of the multitude, but their spirits had gane to hea-

ven, to receive the eternal rewards of sanctity and truth."

Not a house in all the parish—scarcely excepting Mount Pleasant itself—all round and about which our heart could in some dreamy hour raise to life a greater multitude of dear old remembrances, all touching ourselves, than LOGAN BRAES. The old people when we first knew them, we used to think somewhat apt to be surly—for they were Seceders—and owing to some unavoidable prejudices, which we were at no great pains to vanquish, we Manse-boys recognised something repulsive in that most respectable word. Yet for the sake of that sad story of the Martyrs, there was always something affecting to us in the name of Logan Braes; and though Beltane was of old a Pagan Festival, celebrated with grave idolatries round fires a-blaze on a thousand hills, yet old Laurence Logan would sweeten his vinegar aspect on May-day, would wipe out a score of wrinkles, and calm, as far as that might be, the terrors of his shaggy eyebrows. A little gentleness of manner goes a long way with such young folk as we were all then, when it is seen naturally and easily worn for our sakes, and in sympathy with our accustomed glee, by one who in his ordinary deportment may have added the austerity of religion to the venerableness of old age. Smiles from old Laurence Logan, the Seceder, were like rare sun-glimpses in the gloom—and made the hush of his house pleasant as a more cheerful place; for through the restraint laid on reverent youth by feeling akin to fear, the heart ever and anon bounded with freedom in the

smile of the old man's eyes. Plain was his own apparel —a suit of the hodden-grey. His wife, when in full dress, did not remind us of a Quakeress, for a Quakeress then had we never seen—but we often think now, when in company with a still, sensible, cheerful, and comely-visaged matron of that sect, of her of Logan-Braes. No waster was she of her tears, or her smiles, or her words, or her money, or her meal—either among those of her own blood, or the stranger or the beggar that was within her gates. You heard not her foot on the floor—yet never was she idle—moving about in doors and out, from morning till night, so placid and so composed, and always at small cost dressed so decently, so becomingly to one who was not yet old, and had not forgotten—why should she not remember it?—that she was esteemed in youth a beauty, and that it was not for want of a richer and younger lover, that she agreed at last to become the wife of the Laird of Logan Braes.

Their family consisted of two sons and a niece;—and be thou who thou mayest that hast so far read our May-day, we doubt not that thine eyes will glance—however rapidly—over another page, nor fling it contemptuously aside, because amidst all the chance and change of administrations, ministries, and ministers in high places, there murmur along the channels of our memory "the simple annals of the poor," like unpolluted streams that sweep not by city walls.

Never were two brothers more unlike in all things—in mind, body, habits, and disposition—than Lawrie and Willie Logan—and we see, as in a glass, at this

very moment, both their images. "Wee Wise Willie"—for by that name he was known over several parishes—was one of those extraordinary creatures that one may liken to a rarest plant, which nature sows here and there—sometimes for ever unregarded—among the common families of Flowers. Early sickness had been his lot—continued with scarcely any interruption from his cradle to school-years—so that not only was his stature stunted, but his whole frame was delicate in the extreme; and his pale small-featured face, remarkable for large, soft, down-looking, hazel eyes, dark-lashed in their lustre, had a sweet feminine character, that corresponded well with his voice, his motions, and his in-door pursuits—all serene and composed, and interfering with the outgoings of no other living thing. All sorts of scholarship, such as the parish schoolmaster knew, he mastered as if by intuition. His slate was quickly covered with long calculations, by which the most puzzling questions were solved; and ere he was nine years old, he had made many pretty mechanical contrivances with wheels and pulleys, that showed in what direction lay the natural bent of his genius. Languages, too, the creature seemed to see into with quickest eyes, and with quickest ears to catch their sounds—so that, at the same tender age, he might have been called a linguist, sitting with his Greek and Latin books on a stool beside him by the fireside during the long winter nights. All the neighbours who had any books, cheerfully lent them to "Wee Wise Willie," and the Manse-boys gave him many a supply. At the head of

every class he, of course, was found—but no ambition had he to be there; and like a bee that works among many thousand others on the clover-lea, heedless of their murmurs, and intent wholly on its own fragrant toil, did he go from task to task—although that was no fitting name for the studious creature's meditations on all he read or wrought—no more a task for him to grow in knowledge and in thought, than for a lily of the field to lift up its head towards the sun. That child's religion was like all the other parts of his character—as prone to tears as that of other children, when they read of the Divine Friend dying for them on the cross; but it was profounder far than theirs, when it shed no tears, and only made the paleness of his countenance more like that which we imagine to be the paleness of a phantom. No one ever saw him angry, complaining, or displeased; for angelical indeed was his temper, purified, like gold in fire, by suffering. He shunned not the company of other children, but loved all, as by them all he was more than beloved. In few of their plays could he take an active share; but sitting a little way off, still attached to the merry brotherhood, though in their society he had no part to enact, he read his book on the knoll, or, happy dreamer, sunk away among the visions of his own thoughts. There was poetry in that child's spirit, but it was too essentially blended with his whole happiness in life, often to be embodied in written words. A few compositions were found in his own small beautiful handwriting after his death—hymns and psalms. Prayers, too, had his heart indited—but they were not in

measured language—framed, in his devout simplicity, on the model of our Lord's. How many hundred times have we formed a circle round him in the gloaming, all sitting or lying on the greensward, before the dews had begun to descend, listening to his tales and stories of holy or heroic men and women, who had been greatly good and glorious in the days of old! Not unendeared to his imagination were the patriots, who, living and dying, loved the liberties of the land—Tell—Bruce—or Wallace, he in whose immortal name a thousand rocks rejoice, while many a wood bears it on its summits as they are swinging to the storm. Weak as a reed that is shaken in the wind, or the stalk of a flower that tremblingly sustains its blossoms beneath the dews that feed their transitory lustre, was he whose lips were so eloquent to read the eulogies of mighty men of war riding mailed through bloody battles. What matters it that this frame of dust be frail, and of tiny size—still may it be the tenement of a lordly spirit. But high as such warfare was, it satisfied not that thoughtful child—for other warfare there was to read of, which was to him a far deeper and more divine delight—the warfare waged by good men against the legions of sin, and closed triumphantly in the eye of God—let this world deem as it will—on obscurest death-beds, or at the stake, or on the scaffold, where a profounder even than Sabbath silence glorifies the martyr far beyond any shout that from the immense multitude would have torn the concave of the heavens.

What a contrast to that creature was his elder brother! Lawrie was eighteen years old when first we visited Logan

Braes, and was a perfect hero in strength and stature—Bob Howie alone his equal—but Bob was then in the West Indies. In the afternoons, after his work was over in the fields or in the barn, he had pleasure in getting us Manse-boys to accompany him to the Moor-Lochs for an hour's angling or two in the evening, when the large trouts came to the gravelly shallows, and, as we waded midleg-deep, would sometimes take the fly among our very feet. Or he would go with us into the heart of the great wood, to show us where the foxes had their earths—the party being sometimes so fortunate as to see the cubs disporting at the mouth of the briery aperture in the strong and root-bound soil. Or we followed him, so far as he thought it safe for us to do so, up the foundations of the castle, and in fear and wonder that no repetition of the adventurous feat ever diminished, saw him take the young starling from the crevice beneath the tuft of wall-flowers. What was there of the bold and daring that Lawrie Logan was not, in our belief, able to perform? We were all several years younger—boys from nine to fifteen—and he had shot up into sudden manhood—not only into its shape but its strength—yet still the boyish spirit was fresh within him, and he never wearied of us in such excursions. The minister had a good opinion of his principles, knowing how he had been brought up, and did not discountenance his visits to the Manse, nor ours to Logan Braes. Then what danger could we be in, go where we might, with one who had more than once shown how eager he was to risk his own life when that of another was in jeo-

pardy? Generous and fearless youth! To thee we owed our own life—although seldom is that rescue now remembered—(for what will not in this turmoiling world be forgotten?) when in pride of the newly-acquired art of swimming, we had ventured—with our clothes on too—some ten yards into the Brother-Loch, to disentangle our line from the water-lilies. It seemed that a hundred cords had got entangled round our legs, and our heart quaked too desperately to suffer us to shriek—but Lawrie Logan had his hand on us in a minute, and brought us to shore as easily as a Newfoundland dog lands a bit of floating wood.

But that was a momentary danger, and Lawrie Logan ran but small risk, you will say, in saving us; so let us not extol that instance of his intrepidity. But fancy to yourself, gentle reader, the hideous mouth of an old coal-pit, that had not been worked for time immemorial, overgrown with thorns, and briers, and brackens, but still visible from a small mount above it, for some yards down its throat—the very throat of death and perdition. But can you fancy also the childish and superstitious terror with which we all regarded that coal-pit, for it was said to be a hundred fathom deep—with water at the bottom—so that you had to wait for many moments—almost a minute—before you heard a stone, first beating against its sides—from one to the other—plunge at last into the pool profound. In that very field, too, a murder had been perpetrated, and the woman's corpse flung by her sweetheart into that coal-pit. One day some unaccountable

impulse had led a band of us into that interdicted field—which we remember was not arable—but said to be a place where a hare was always sure to be found sitting among the binweeds and thistles. A sort of thrilling horror urged us on closer and closer to the mouth of the pit—when Wee Wise Willie's foot slipping on the brae, he bounded with inexplicable force along—in among the thorns, briers, and brackens—through the whole hanging mat, and without a shriek, down—down—down into destruction. We all saw it happen—every one of us—and it is scarcely too much to say, that we were for a while all mad with horror. Yet we felt ourselves borne back instinctively from the horrible pit—and as aid we could give none, we listened if we could hear any cry—but there was none—and we all flew together out of the dreadful field, and again collecting ourselves together, feared to separate on the different roads to our homes. "Oh! can it be that our Wee Wise Willie has this moment died sic a death—and no a single ane amang us a' greetin' for his sake?" said one of us aloud; and then indeed did we burst out into rueful sobbing, and ask one another who could carry such tidings to Logan Braes? All at once we heard a clear, rich, mellow whistle as of a blackbird—and there with his favourite colley, searching for a stray lamb among the knolls, was Lawrie Logan, who hailed us with a laughing voice, and then asked us, "Whare is Wee Willie?—hae ye flung him like another Joseph into the pit?" The consternation of our faces could not be misunderstood—whether we told him or not what had happened

we do not know—but he staggered as if he would have fallen down—and then ran off with amazing speed—not towards Logan Braes—but the village. We continued helplessly to wander about back and forwards along the near edge of a wood, when we beheld a multitude of people rapidly advancing, and in a few minutes they surrounded the mouth of the pit. It was about the very end of the hay-harvest—and many ropes that had been employed that very day in the leading of the hay of the Landlord of the Inn, who was also an extensive farmer, were tied together to the length of at least twenty fathom. Hope was quite dead—but her work is often done by Despair. For a while there was confusion all round the pit-mouth, but with a white fixed face and glaring eyes, Lawrie Logan advanced to the very brink, with the rope bound in many firm folds around him, and immediately behind him stood his grey-headed father, unbonneted, just as he had risen from a prayer. "Is't my ain father that's gaun to help me to gang doon to bring up Willie's body? O! merciful God, what a judgment is this! Father—father—Oh! lie down at some distance awa' frae the sight o' this place. Robin Alison, and Gabriel Strang, and John Borland, 'll haud the ropes firm and safe. O, father—father—lie down, a bit apart frae the crowd; and have mercy upon him—O thou, great God, have mercy upon him!" But the old man kept his place; and the only one son who now survived to him disappeared within the jaws of the same murderous pit, and was lowered slowly down, nearer and nearer to his little brother's

corpse. They had spoken to him of foul air, of which to breathe is death, but he had taken his resolution, and not another word had been said to shake it. And now, for a short time, there was no weight at the line, except that of its own length. It was plain that he had reached the bottom of the pit. Silent was all that congregation, as if assembled in divine worship. Again, there was a weight at the rope, and in a minute or two, a voice was heard far down the pit that spread a sort of wild hope—else, why should it have spoken at all—and lo! the child—not like one of the dead—clasped in the arms of his brother, who was all covered with dust and blood. "Fall all down on your knees—in the face o' heaven, and sing praises to God, for my brother is yet alive!"

During that Psalm, father, mother, and both their sons—the rescuer and the rescued—and their sweet cousin too, Annie Raeburn, the orphan, were lying embraced in speechless—almost senseless trances; for the agony of such a deliverance was more than could well by mortal creatures be endured.

The child himself was the first to tell how his life had been miraculously saved. A few shrubs had for many years been growing out of the inside of the pit, almost as far down as the light could reach, and among them had he been entangled in his descent, and held fast. For days, and weeks, and months, after that deliverance, few persons visited Logan Braes, for it was thought that old Laurence's brain had received a shock from which it might never recover; but the trouble that tried him subsided, and the inside of the house was again quiet as

before, and its hospitable door open to all the neighbours.

Never forgetful of his primal duties had been that bold youth—but too apt to forget the many smaller ones that are wrapped round a life of poverty like invisible threads, and that cannot be broken violently or carelessly, without endangering the calm consistency of all its ongoings, and ultimately causing perhaps great losses, errors, and distress. He did not keep evil society—but neither did he shun it: and having a pride in feats of strength and activity, as was natural to a stripling whose corporeal faculties could not be excelled, he frequented all meetings where he was likely to fall in with worthy competitors, and in such trials of power, by degrees acquired a character for recklessness, and even violence, of which prudent men prognosticated evil, and that sorely disturbed his parents, who were, in their quiet retreat, lovers of all peace. With what wonder and admiration did all the Manse-boys witness and hear reported the feats of Lawrie Logan! It was he who, in pugilistic combat, first vanquished Black King Carey the Egyptian, who travelled the country with two wives and a waggon of Staffordshire pottery, and had struck the "Yokel," as he called Lawrie, in the midst of all the tents on Leddrie Green, at the great annual Baldernoch fair. Six times did the bare and bronzed Egyptian bite the dust —nor did Lawrie Logan always stand against the blows of one whose provincial fame was high in England, as the head of the Rough-and-Ready School. Even now—as in an ugly dream—we see the combatants alternately

prostrate, and returning to the encounter, covered with mire and blood. All the women left the Green, and the old men shook their heads at such unchristian work; but Lawrie Logan did not want backers in the shepherds and the ploughmen, to see fair play against all the attempts of the Showmen and the Newcastle horse-cowpers, who laid their money thick on the King; till a right-hander in the pit of the stomach, which had nearly been the gipsy's everlasting quietus, gave the victory to Lawrie, amid acclamations that would have fitlier graced a triumph in a better cause. But that day was an evil day to all at Logan Braes. A recruiting sergeant got Lawrie into the tent, over which floated the colours of the 42d Regiment, and in the intoxication of victory, whisky, and the bagpipe, the young champion was as fairly enlisted into his Majesty's service, as ever young girl, without almost knowing it, was married at Gretna-Green; and as the 42d were under orders to sail in a week, gold could not have bought off such a man, and Lawrie Logan went on board a transport.

Logan Braes was not the same place—indeed, the whole parish seemed altered—after Lawrie was gone, and our visits were thenceforth any thing but cheerful ones, going by turns to enquire for Willie, who seemed to be pining away—not in any deadly disease, but just as if he himself knew, that without ailing much he was not to be a long liver. Yet nearly two years passed on, and all that time the principle of life had seemed like a flickering flame within him, that when you think it expiring or expired, streams up again with surprising

brightness, and continues to glimmer even steadily with a protracted light. Every week—nay, almost every day, they feared to lose him—yet there he still was at morning and evening prayers. The third spring after the loss of his brother was remarkably mild, and breathing with west-winds that came softened over many woody miles from the sea. He seemed stronger, and more cheerful, and expressed a wish that the Manse-boys, and some others of his companions, would come to Logan Braes, and once again celebrate May-day. There we all sat at the long table, and both parents did their best to look cheerful during the feast. Indeed, all that had once been harsh and forbidding in the old man's looks and manners, was now softened down by the perpetual yearnings at his heart towards "the distant far and absent long," nor less towards him that peaceful and pious child, whom every hour he saw, or thought he saw, awaiting a call from the eternal voice. Although sometimes sadness fell across us like a shadow, yet the hours passed on as May-day hours should do; and what with our many-toned talk and laughter, the cooing of the pigeons on the roof, and the twittering of the swallows beneath the eaves, and the lark-songs ringing like silver bells over all the heavens, it seemed a day that ought to bring good tidings—or, the Soldier himself returning from the wars to bless the eyes of his parents once more, so that they might die in peace. "Heaven hold us in its keeping, for there's his wraith!" ejaculated Annie Raeburn. "It passed before the window, and my Lawrie, I now know, is with the dead!"—Bending

his stately head beneath the lintel of the door, in the dress, and with the bearing of a soldier, Lawrie Logan stepped again across his father's threshold, and, ere he well uttered "God be with you all!" Willie was within his arms, and on his bosom. His father and his mother rose not from their chairs, but sat still, with faces like ashes. But we boys could not resist our joy, and shouted his name aloud—while Luath, from his sleep in the corner, leapt on his master breast-high, and whining his dumb delight, frisked round him as of yore, when impatient to snuff the dawn on the hill-side. "Let us go out and play," said a boy's voice, and issuing somewhat seriously into the sunshine, we left the family within to themselves, and then walked away, without speaking, down to the Bridge.

After the lapse of an hour or more, and while we were all considering whether or no we should return to the house, the figure of Annie Raeburn was seen coming down the brae towards the party, in a way very unlike her usual staid and quiet demeanour, and stopping at some distance, to beckon with her hand more particularly, it was thought, on ourselves, as we stood a few yards apart from the rest. "Willie is worse," were the only words she said, as we hastened back together; and on entering the room, we found the old man uncertainly pacing the floor by himself, but with a composed countenance. "He expressed a wish to see you—but he is gone!" We followed into Willie's small bedroom and study, and beheld him already *laid out*, and his mother sitting as calmly beside him as if she were watching his

sleep. "Sab not sae sair, Lawrie—God was gracious to let him live to this day, that he micht dee in his brither's arms."

The sun has mounted high in heaven, while thus we have been dreaming away the hours—a dozen miles at least have we slowly wandered over, since morning, along pleasant by-paths, where never dust lay, or from gate to gate of pathless enclosures, a trespasser fearless of those threatening nonentities, spring-guns. There is the turnpike-road—the great north and south road—for it is either the one or the other, according to the airt towards which you choose to turn your face. Behold a little WAYSIDE INN, neatly thatched, and with white-washed front, and sign-board hanging from a tree, on which are painted the figures of two jolly gentlemen, one in kilts and the other in breeches, shaking hands cautiously across a running brook. The meal of all meals is a paulo-post-meridian breakfast. The rosiness of the combs of these strapping hens is good augury;—hark, a cackle from the barn—another egg is laid—and chanticleer, stretching himself up on claw-tip, and clapping his wings of the bonny beaten gold, crows aloud to his sultana till the welkin rings. "Turn to the left, sir, if you please," quoth a comely matron; and we find ourselves snugly seated in an arm-chair, not wearied, but to rest willing, while the clock ticks pleasantly, and we take no note of time but by its gain; for here is our journal, in which we shall put down a few jottings for MAY-DAY. Three boiled eggs —one to each penny-roll—are sufficient, under any cir-

cumstances, along with the same number fried with mutton-ham, for the breakfast of a Gentleman and a Tory. Nor do we remember—when tea-cups have been on a proper scale, ever to have wished to go beyond the Golden Rule of Three. In politics, we confess that we are rather ultra; but in all things else we love moderation. "Come in, my bonny little lassie—ye needna keep keekin' in that gate fra ahint the door"—and in a few minutes the curly-pated prattler is murmuring on our knee. The sonsie wife, well-pleased with the sight, and knowing from our kindness to children, that we are on the same side of politics with her gudeman—Ex-sergeant in the Black Watch, and once Orderly to Garth himself—brings out her ain bottle from the spence—a hollow square, and green as emerald. Bless the gurgle of its honest mouth! With prim lips mine hostess kisses the glass, previously letting fall a not inelegant curtsy—for she had, we now learned, been a lady's maid in her youth to one who is indeed a lady, all the time her lover was abroad in the army, in Egypt, Ireland, and the West Indies, and Malta, and Guernsey, Sicily, Portugal, Holland, and, we think she said, Corfu. One of the children has been sent to the field, where her husband is sowing barley, to tell him that there is fear lest dinner cool; and the mistress now draws herself up in pride of his noble appearance, as the stately Highlander salutes us with the respectful but bold air of one who has seen some service at home and abroad. Never knew we a man make other than a good bow, who had partaken freely in a charge of bayonets.

Shenstone's lines about always meeting the warmest welcome in an inn, are very natural and tender—as most of his compositions are, when he was at all in earnest. For our own part, we cannot complain of ever meeting any other welcome than a warm one, go where we may; for we are not obtrusive, and where we are not either liked, or loved, or esteemed, or admired, (that last is a strong word, yet we all have our admirers,) we are exceeding chary of the light of our countenance. But at an inn, the only kind of welcome that is indispensable, is a civil one. When that is not forthcoming, we shake the dust, or the dirt, off our feet, and pursue our journey, well assured that a few milestones will bring us to a humaner roof. Incivility and surliness have occasionally given us opportunities of beholding rare celestial phenomena—meteors—falling and shooting stars—the Aurora Borealis, in her shifting splendours—haloes round the moon, variously bright as the rainbow—electrical arches forming themselves on the sky in a manner so wondrously beautiful, that we should be sorry to hear them accounted for by philosophers—one half of the horizon blue, and without a cloud, and the other driving tempestuously like the sea-foam, with waves mountain-high—and divinest show of all for a solitary night-wandering man, who has any thing of a soul at all, far and wide, and high up into the gracious heavens, Planets and Stars all burning as if their urns were newly fed with light, not twinkling as they do in a dewy or a vapoury night, although then, too, are the softened or veiled luminaries beautiful—but large, full, and free

over the whole firmament—a galaxy of shining and unanswerable arguments in proof of the Immortality of the Soul.

The whole world is improving; nor can there be a pleasanter proof of that than this very wayside inn—ycleped the SALUTATION. What a miserable pot-house it was long ago, with a rusty-hinged door, that would neither open nor shut—neither let you out nor in—immovable and intractable to foot or hand—or all at once, when you least expected it to yield, slamming to with a bang; a constant puddle in front during rainy weather, and heaped up dust in dry—roof partly thatched, partly slated, partly tiled, and partly open to the elements, with its naked rafters. Broken windows repaired with an old petticoat, or a still older pair of breeches, and walls that had always been plastered and better plastered and worse plastered, in frosty weather—all labour in vain, as crumbling patches told, and variegated streaks, and stains of dismal ochre, meanest of all colours, and still symptomatic of want, mismanagement, bankruptcy, and perpetual flittings from a tenement that was never known to have paid any rent. Then what a pair of drunkards were old Saunders and his spouse! Yet never once were they seen drunk on a Sabbath, or a fast-day—regular kirk-goers, and attentive observers of ordinances. They had not very many children, yet, pass the door when you might, you were sure to hear a squall or a shriek, or the ban of the mother, or the smacking of the palm of the hand on the part of the enemy easiest of access; or you saw one of the rag-

ged fiends pursued by a parent round the corner, and brought back by the hair of the head till its eyes were like those of a Chinese. Now, what decency—what neatness—what order—in this household—this private public! into which customers step like neighbours on a visit, and are served with a heartiness and good-will that deserve the name of hospitality, for they are gratuitous, and can only be repaid in kind. A limited prospect does that latticed-window command—and the small panes cut objects into too many parts—little more than the breadth of the turnpike road, and a hundred yards of the same, to the north and to the south, with a few budding hedgerows, half a dozen trees, and some green braes. Yet could we sit and moralize, and intellectualize, for hours at this window, nor hear the striking clock.

There trips by a blooming maiden of middle degree, all alone—the more's the pity—yet perfectly happy in her own society, and one we venture to say who never received a love-letter, valentines excepted, in all her innocent days. —A fat man sitting by himself in a gig! somewhat red in the face, as if he had dined early, and not so sure of the road as his horse, who has drunk nothing but a single pailfull of water, and is anxious to get to town that he may be rubbed down, and see oats once more.—Scamper away, ye joyous schoolboys, and, for your sake, may that cloud breathe forth rain and breeze, before you reach the burn, which you seem to fear may run dry before you can see the Pool where the two-pounders lie.—Methinks we know that old woman, and of the first novel we write

she shall be the heroine.—Ha! a brilliant bevy of mounted maidens, in riding-habits, and Spanish hats, with "swaling feathers"—sisters, it is easy to see, and daughters of one whom we either loved, or thought we loved; but now they say she is fat and vulgar, is the devil's own scold, and makes her servants and her husband lead the lives of slaves. All that we can say is, that once on a time it was *tout une autre chose*; for a smaller foot, a slimmer ankle, a more delicate waist, arms more lovely, reposing in their gracefulness beneath her bosom, tresses of brighter and more burnished auburn—such starlike eyes, thrilling without seeking to reach the soul —But phoo! phoo! phoo! she married a jolter-headed squire with two thousand acres, and, in self-defence, has grown fat, vulgar, and a scold.—There is a Head for a painter! and what perfect peace and placidity all over the Blind Man's countenance! He is not a beggar, although he lives on alms—those sightless orbs ask not for charity, nor yet those withered hands, as, staff-supported, he stops at the kind voice of the traveller, and tells his story in a few words. On the ancient Dervise moves, with his long silvery hair, journeying contentedly in darkness towards the eternal light.—A gang of gipsies! with their numerous assery laden with horn-spoons, pots, and pans, and black-eyed children. We should not be surprised to read some day in the newspapers, that the villain who leads the van had been executed for burglary, arson, and murder. That is the misfortune of having a bad physiognomy, a sidelong look, a scarred cheek, and a cruel grin about the muscles of the mouth; to say

nothing about rusty hair protruding through the holes of a brown hat, not made for the wearer—long, sinewy arms, all of one thickness, terminating in huge, hairy, horny hands, chiefly knuckles and nails—a shambling gait, notwithstanding that his legs are finely proportioned, as if the night prowler were cautious not to be heard by the sleeping house, nor to awaken—so noiseless his stealthy advances—the unchained mastiff in his kennel.

But, hark! the spirit-stirring music of fife and drum! A whole regiment of soldiers on their march to replace another whole regiment of soldiers—and that is as much as we can be expected to know about their movements. Food for the cannon's mouth; but the maw of war has been gorged and satiated, and the glittering soap-bubbles of reputation, blown by windy-cheeked Fame from the bole of her pipe, have all burst as they have been clutched by the hands of tall fellows in red raiment, and with feathers on their heads, just before going to lie down on what is called the bed of honour. Melancholy indeed to think, that all these fine, fierce, ferocious, fire-eaters are doomed, but for some unlooked-for revolution in the affairs of Europe and the world, to die in their beds! Yet there is some comfort in thinking of the composition of a Company of brave defenders of their country. It is, we shall suppose, Seventy strong. Well, jot down three ploughmen, genuine clodhoppers, chaw-bacons *sans peur et sans reproche*, except that the overseers of the parish were upon them with orders of affiliation; add one

shepherd, who made contradictory statements about the number of the spring lambs, and in whose house had been found during winter certain fleeces, for which no ingenuity could account; a laird's son, long known by the name of the Ne'erdoweel; a Man of tailors, forced to accept the bounty-money during a protracted strike —not dungs they, but flints all the nine; a barber, like many a son of genius, ruined by his wit, and who, after being driven from pole to pole, found refuge in the army at last; a bankrupt butcher, once a bully, and now a poltron; two of the Seven Young Men—all that now survive—impatient of the drudgery of the compting-house, and the injustice of the age—but they, we believe, are in the band—the triangle and the serpent; twelve cotton-spinners at the least; six weavers of woollens; a couple of colliers from the bowels of the earth; and a score of miscellaneous rabble—flunkies long out of place, and unable to live on their liveries—felons acquitted, or that have dreed their punishment—picked men from the shilling galleries of playhouses—and the élite of the refuse and sweepings of the jails. Look how all the rogues and reprobates march like one man! Alas! was it of such materials that our conquering army was made?—were such the heroes of Talavera, Salamanca, Vittoria, and Waterloo?

Why not, and what then? Heroes are but men after all. Men, as men go, are the materials of which heroes are made; and recruits in three years ripen into veterans. Cowardice in one campaign is disciplined into courage, fear into valour. In presence of the enemy, pickpockets

become patriots—members of the swell mob volunteer on forlorn hopes, and step out from the ranks to head the storm. Lord bless you! have you not studied sympathy and *l'esprit de corps?* An army fifty thousand strong consists, we shall suppose, in equal portions of saints and sinners; and saints and sinners are all English, Irish, Scottish. What wonder, then, that they drive all resistance to the devil, and go on from victory to victory, keeping all the cathedrals and churches in England hard at work with all their organs, from Christmas to Christmas, blowing *Te Deum?* You must not be permitted too curiously to analyse the composition of the British army or the British navy. Look at them, think of them as Wholes, with Nelson or Wellington the head, and in one slump pray God to bless the defenders of the throne, the hearth, and the altar.

The baggage-waggons halt, and some refreshment is sent for to the women and children. Ay, creatures not far advanced in their teens are there—a year or two ago, at school or service, happy as the day was long, now mothers, with babies at their breasts—happy still perhaps; but that pretty face is wofully wan—that hair did not use to be so dishevelled—and bony, and clammy, and blue-veined is the hand that lay so white, and warm, and smooth, in the grasp of the seducer. Yet she thinks she is his wife; and, in truth, there is a ring on her marriage-finger. But, should the regiment embark, so many women, and no more, are suffered to go with a company; and, should one of the lots not fall on her, she may take of her husband an everlasting farewell.

The Highflier Coach! carrying six in, and twelve outsides—driver and guard excluded—rate of motion eleven miles an hour, with stoppages. Why, in the name of Heaven, are all people now-a-days in such haste and hurry? Is it absolutely necessary that one and all of this dozen and a half Protestants and Catholics—alike anxious for emancipation—should be at a particular place, at one particular moment of time out of the twenty-four hours given to man for motion and for rest? Confident are we that that obese elderly gentleman beside the coachman—whose ample rotundity is encased in that antique and almost obsolete invention, a spenser—needed not to have been so carried in a whirlwind to his comfortable home. Scarcely is there time for pity as we behold an honest man's wife, pale as putty in the face at a tremendous swing, or lounge, or lurch of the Highflier, holding like grim death to the balustrades. But umbrellas, parasols, plaids, shawls, bonnets, and great-coats with as many necks as Hydra—the Pile of Life has disappeared in a cloud of dust, and the faint bugle tells that already it has spun and reeled onwards a mile on its destination.

But here comes a vehicle at a more rational pace. Mercy on us—a hearse and six horses returning leisurely from a funeral! Not improbable that the person who has just quitted it, had never, till he was a corpse, got higher than a single-horse Chay—yet no fewer than half-a-dozen hackneys must be hired for his dust. But clear the way! "Hurra! hurra! he rides a race, 'tis for a thousand pound!" Another, and another, and another—all

working away with legs and knees, arms and shoulders, on cart-horses in the Brooze—the Brooze! The hearse-horses take no sort of notice of the cavalry of cart and plough, but each in turn keeps its snorting nostrils deep plunged in the pail of meal and water—for well may they be thirsty—the kirkyard being far among the hills, and the roads not yet civilized. "May I ask, friend," addressing ourself to the hearseman, "whom you have had inside?" "Only Dr Sandilands, sir—if you are going my way, you may have a lift for a dram!" We had always thought there was a superstition in Scotland against marrying in the month of May; but it appears that people are wedded and bedded in that month too—some in warm sheets—and some in cold—cold—cold—dripping damp as the grave.

But we must up, and off. Not many gentlemen's houses in the parish—that is to say, old family seats; for of modern villas, or boxes, inhabited by persons imagining themselves gentlemen, and, for any thing we know to the contrary, not wholly deceived in that belief, there is rather too great an abundance. Four family seats, however, there certainly are, of sufficient antiquity to please a lover of the olden time; and of those four, the one which we used to love best to look at was—The Mains. No need to describe it in many words. A Hall on a river side, embosomed in woods—holms and meadows winding away in front, with their low thick hedgerows and stately single trees—on—on—on—as far as the eye can reach, a crowd of grove-tops—elms chiefly, or

beeches—and a beautiful boundary of blue hills. "Good-day, Sergeant Stewart! farewell, Ma'am—farewell!" And in half an hour we are sitting in the moss-house at the edge of the outer garden, and gazing up at the many-windowed grey walls of the MAINS, and its high steep-ridged roof, discoloured by the weather-stains of centuries. "The taxes on such a house," quod Sergeant Stewart, "are of themselves enough to ruin a man of moderate fortune—so the Mains, sir, has been uninhabited for a good many years." But he had been speaking to one who knew far more about the Mains than he could do—and who was not sorry that the Old Place was allowed to stand, undisturbed by any rich upstart, in the venerable silence of its own decay. And this is the moss-house that we helped to build with our own hands at least to hang the lichen tapestry, and stud the cornice with shells! We were one of the paviers of that pebbled floor—and that bright scintillating piece of spar, the centre of the circle, came all the way from Derbyshire in the knapsack of a geologist, who died a Professor. It is strange the roof has not fallen in long ago; but what a slight ligature will often hold together a heap of ruins from tumbling into nothing! The old moss-house, though somewhat decrepit, is alive; and, if these swallows don't take care, they will be stunning themselves against our face, jerking out and in, through door and window, twenty times in a minute. Yet with all that twittering of swallows—and with all that frequent crowing of a cock—and all that cawing of rooks—and cooing of doves—and low-

ing of cattle along the holms—and bleating of lambs along the braes—it is nevertheless a pensive place; and here sit we like a hermit, world-sick, and to be revived only by hearkening in the solitude to the voices of other years.

What more mournful thought than that of a Decayed Family—a high-born race gradually worn out, and finally ceasing to be! The remote ancestors of this House were famous men of war—then some no less famous statesmen—then poets and historians—then minds still of fine, but of less energetic mould—and last of all, the mystery of madness breaking suddenly forth from spirits that seemed to have been especially formed for profoundest peace. There were three sons and two daughters, undegenerate from the ancient stateliness of the race—the oldest on his approach to manhood erect as the young cedar, that seems conscious of being destined one day to be the tallest tree in the woods. The twin-sisters were ladies indeed! Lovely as often are the low-born, no maiden ever stepped from her native cottage-door, even in a poet's dream, with such an air as that with which those fair beings walked along their saloons and lawns. Their beauty no one could at all describe—and no one beheld it who did not say that it transcended all that imagination had been able to picture of angelic and divine. As the sisters were, so were the brothers—distinguished above all their mates conspicuously, and beyond all possibility of mistake; so that strangers could single them out at once as the heirs of beauty, that, according to veritable pictures and true traditions, had

been an unalienable gift from nature to that family ever since it bore the name. For the last three generations none of that house had ever reached even the meridian of life—and those of whom we now speak had from childhood been orphans. Yet how joyous and free were they one and all, and how often from this cell did evening hear their holy harmonies, as the Five united together with voice, harp, and dulcimer, till the stars themselves rejoiced!—One morning, Louisa, who loved the dewy dawn, was met bewildered in her mind, and perfectly astray—with no symptom of having been suddenly alarmed or terrified—but with an unrecognising smile, and eyes scarcely changed in their expression, although they knew not—but rarely—on whom they looked. It was but a few months till she died—and Adelaide was laughing carelessly on her sister's funeral day—and asked why mourning should be worn at a marriage, and a plumed hearse sent to take away the bride. Fairest of God's creatures! can it be that thou art still alive? Not with cherubs smiling round thy knees—not walking in the free realms of earth and heaven with thy husband—the noble youth, who loved thee from thy childhood when himself a child; but oh! that such misery can be beneath the sun—shut up in some narrow cell perhaps—no one knows where—whether in this thy native kingdom, or in some foreign land—with those hands manacled—a demon-light in eyes once most angelical—and ringing through undistinguishable days and nights imaginary shriekings and yellings in thy poor distracted brain!—Down went the ship with all her crew in which Percy sailed;—the

sabre must have been in the hand of a skilful swordsman that in one of the Spanish battles hewed Sholto down; and the gentle Richard, whose soul—while he possessed it clearly—was for ever among the sacred books, although too long he was as a star vainly sought for in a cloudy region, yet did for a short time starlike reappear—and on his death-bed he knew us, and the other mortal creatures weeping beside him, and that there was One who died to save sinners.

Let us away—let us away from this overpowering place—and make our escape from such unendurable sadness. Is this fit celebration of merry May-day? Is this the spirit in which we ought to look over the bosom of the earth, all teeming with buds and flowers just as man's heart should be teeming—and why not ours—with hopes and joys? Yet beautiful as this May-day is—and all the country round which it so tenderly illumines, we came not hither, a solitary pilgrim from our distant home, to indulge ourself in a joyful happiness. No, hither came we purposely to mourn among the scenes which in boyhood we seldom beheld through tears. And therefore have we chosen the gayest day of all the year, when all life is rejoicing, from the grashopper among our feet to the lark in the cloud. Melancholy, and not mirth, doth he hope to find, who after a life of wandering—and maybe not without sorrow—comes back to gaze on the banks and braes whereon, to his eyes, once grew the flowers of Paradise. Flowers of Paradise are ye still—for, praise be to Heaven! the sense of beauty is still strong within us—and methinks we could feel the beauty of this scene though our heart were broken.

SACRED POETRY.

CHAPTER I.

We have often exposed the narrowness and weakness of that dogma, so pertinaciously adhered to by persons of cold hearts and limited understandings, that Religion is not a fit theme for poetical genius, and that Sacred Poetry is beyond the powers of uninspired man. We do not know that the grounds on which that dogma stands have ever been formally stated by any writer but Samuel Johnson; and therefore with all respect, nay, veneration, for his memory, we shall now shortly examine his statement, which, though, as we think, altogether unsatisfactory and sophistical, is yet a splendid specimen of false reasoning, and therefore worthy of being exposed and overthrown. Dr Johnson was not often utterly wrong in his mature and considerate judgments respecting any subject of paramount importance to the virtue and happiness of mankind. He was a good and wise being; but sometimes he did grievously err; and never more so than in his vain

endeavour to exclude from the province of poetry its noblest, highest, and holiest domain. Shut the gates of heaven against Poetry, and her flights along this earth will be feebler and lower—her wings clogged and heavy by the attraction of matter—and her voice—like that of the caged lark, so different from its hymning when lost to sight in the sky—will fail to call forth the deepest responses from the sanctuary of our spirit.

"Let no pious ear be offended," says Johnson, "if I advance, in opposition to many authorities, that poetical devotion cannot often please. The doctrines of religion may indeed be defended in a didactic poem; and he who has the happy power of arguing in verse, will not lose it because his subject is sacred. A poet may describe the beauty and the grandeur of nature, the flowers of spring and the harvests of autumn, the vicissitudes of the tide and the revolutions of the sky, and praise his Maker in lines which no reader shall lay aside. The subject of the disputation is not piety, but the motives to piety; that of the description is not God, but the works of God. Contemplative piety, or the intercourse between God and the human soul, cannot be poetical. Man admitted to implore the mercy of his Creator, and plead the merits of his Redeemer, is already in a higher state than poetry can confer.

"The essence of poetry is invention; such invention as, by producing something unexpected, surprises and delights. The topics of devotion are few, and being few are universally known; but few as they are, they can be made no more; they can receive no grace from novelty of

sentiment, and very little from novelty of expression. Poetry pleases by exhibiting an idea more grateful in the mind than things themselves afford. This effect proceeds from the display of those parts of nature which attract, and the concealment of those that repel, the imagination; but religion must be shown as it is; suppression and addition equally corrupt it; and such as it is, it is known already. From poetry the reader justly expects, and from good poetry always obtains, the enlargement of his comprehension and the elevation of his fancy; but this is rarely to be hoped by Christians from metrical devotion. Whatever is great, desirable, or tremendous, is comprised in the name of the Supreme Being. Omnipotence cannot be exalted; Infidelity cannot be amplified; Perfection cannot be improved.

"The employments of pious meditation are *faith*, *thanksgiving*, *repentance*, and *supplication*. Faith, invariably uniform, cannot be invested by fancy with decorations. Thanksgiving, though the most joyful of all holy effusions, yet addressed to a Being without passions, is confined to a few modes, and is to be felt rather than expressed. Repentance, trembling in the presence of the Judge, is not at leisure for cadences and epithets. Supplication to man may diffuse itself through many topics of persuasion; but supplication to God can only cry for mercy.

"Of sentiments purely religious, it will be found that the most simple expression is the most sublime. Poetry loses its lustre and its power, because it is applied to the decoration of something more excellent than itself.

All that pious verse can do is to help the memory and delight the ear, and for these purposes it may be very useful; but it supplies nothing to the mind. The ideas of Christian Theology are too simple for eloquence, too sacred for fiction, and too majestic for ornament; to recommend them by tropes and figures, is to magnify by a concave mirror the sidereal hemisphere."

Here Dr Johnson confesses that sacred subjects are not unfit—that they are fit—for didactic and descriptive poetry. Now, this is a very wide and comprehensive admission; and being a right, and natural, and just admission, it cannot but strike the thoughtful reader at once as destructive of the great dogma by which Sacred Poetry is condemned. The doctrines of Religion may be defended, he allows, in a didactic poem—and, pray, how can they be defended unless they are also expounded? And how can they be expounded without being steeped, as it were, in religious feeling? Let such a poem be as didactic as can possibly be imagined, still it must be pervaded by the very spirit of religion —and that spirit, breathing throughout the whole, must also be frequently expressed, vividly, and passionately, and profoundly, in particular passages; and if so, must it not be, in the strictest sense, a Sacred poem?

"But," says Dr Johnson, "the subject of the disputation is not piety, but the motives to piety." Why introduce the word "disputation," as if it characterised justly and entirely all didactic poetry? And who ever heard of an essential distinction between piety, and motives to piety? Mr James Montgomery, in a very

excellent Essay prefixed to that most interesting collection, "The Christian Poet," well observes, that "motives to piety must be of the *nature* of piety, otherwise they could never incite to it—the precepts and sanctions of the Gospel might as well be denied to be any part of the Gospel." And, for our own parts, we scarcely know what piety is, separated from its motives —or how, so separated, it could be expressed in words at all.

With regard, again, to descriptive poetry, the argument, if argument it may be called, is still more lame and impotent. "A poet," it is said, "may describe the beauty and the grandeur of nature, the flowers of the spring and the harvests of autumn, the vicissitudes of the tide and the revolutions of the sky, and praise his Maker in lines which no reader shall lay aside." Most true he may; but then we are told, "the subject of the description is not God, but the works of God!" Alas! what trifling—what miserable trifling is this! In the works of God, God is felt to be by us his creatures, whom he has spiritually endowed. We cannot look on them, even in our least elevated moods, without some shadow of love or awe; in our most elevated moods, we gaze on them with religion. By the very constitution of our intelligence, the effects speak of the cause. We are led by nature up to nature's God. The Bible is not the only revelation—there is another —dimmer but not less divine—for surely the works are as the words of God. No great poet, in describing the glories and beauties of the external world, is forgetful

of the existence and attributes of the Most High. That thought, and that feeling, animate all his strains; and though he dare not to describe Him the Ineffable, he cannot prevent his poetry from being beautifully coloured by devotion, tinged by piety—in its essence it is religious.

It appears, then, that the qualifications or restrictions with which Dr Johnson is willing to allow that there may be didactic and descriptive sacred poetry, are wholly unmeaning, and made to depend on distinctions which have no existence.

Of narrative poetry of a sacred kind, Mr Montgomery well remarks, Johnson makes no mention, except it be implicated with the statement, that "the ideas of Christian Theology are too sacred for fiction—a sentiment more just than the admirers of Milton and Klopstock are willing to admit, without almost plenary indulgence in favour of these great, but not infallible authorities." Here Mr Montgomery expresses himself very cautiously—perhaps rather too much so—for he leaves us in the dark about his own belief. But this we do not hesitate to say, that though there is great danger of wrong being done to the ideas of Christian theology by poetry—a wrong which must be most painful to the whole inner being of a Christian; yet that there seems no necessity of such a wrong, and that a great poet, guarded by awe, and fear, and love, may move his wings unblamed, and to the glory of God, even among the most awful sanctities of his faith. These sanctities may be too awful for "fiction"—but fiction is not the word here, any more

than disputation was the word there. Substitute for it the word poetry; and then, reflecting on that of Isaiah and of David, conversant with the Holy of Holies, we feel that it need not profane those other sanctities, if it be, like its subject, indeed divine. True, that those bards were inspired—with them

> —— the name
> Of prophet and of poet was the same;

but still, the power in the soul of a great poet, not in that highest of senses inspired, is, we may say it, of the same kind—inferior but in degree; for religion itself is always an inspiration. It is felt to be so in the prose of holy men—Why not in their poetry?

If these views be just, and we have expressed them "boldly, yet humbly"—all that remains to be set aside of Dr Johnson's argument is, "that contemplative piety, or the intercourse between God and man, cannot be poetical. Man admitted to implore the mercy of his Creator, and plead the merits of his Redeemer, is already in a higher state than poetry can confer."

There is something very fine and true in the sentiment here; but the sentiment is only true in some cases, not in all. There are different degrees in the pious moods of the most pious spirit that ever sought communion with its God and its Saviour. Some of these are awe-struck and speechless. That line,

> "Come, then, expressive silence, muse his praise!"

denies the power of poetry to be adequate to adoration, while the line itself is most glorious poetry. The temper

even of our fallen spirits may be too divine for any words. Then the creature kneels mute before his Maker. But are there not other states of mind in which we feel ourselves drawn near to God, when there is no such awful speechlessness laid upon us—but when, on the contrary, our tongues are loosened, and the heart that burns within will speak? Will speak, perhaps, in song—in the inspiration of our piety breathing forth hymns and psalms—poetry indeed—if there be poetry on this earth? Why may we not say that the spirits of just men made perfect—almost perfect, by such visitations from heaven—will break forth—"rapt, inspired," into poetry which may be called holy, sacred, divine?

We feel as if treading on forbidden ground—and therefore speak reverently; but still we do not fear to say, that between that highest state of contemplative piety which must be mute, down to that lowest state of the same feeling which evanishes and blends into mere human emotion as between creature and creature, there are infinite degrees of emotion which may be all embodied, without offence, in words—and if so embodied, with sincerity and humility, will be poetry, and poetry too of the most beautiful and affecting kind.

"Man, admitted to implore the mercy of his Creator, and plead the merits of his Redeemer, is already in a higher state than poetry can confer." Most true, indeed. But, though poetry did not confer that higher state, poetry may nevertheless, in some measure and to some degree, breathe audibly some of the emotions which constitute its blessedness; poetry may even help the soul

to ascend to those celestial heights; because poetry may prepare it, and dispose it to expand itself, and open itself out to the highest and holiest influences of religion; for poetry there may be inspired directly from the word of God, using the language and strong in the spirit of that word—unexistent but for the Old and the New Testament.

We agree with Mr Montgomery, that the sum of Dr Johnson's argument amounts to this—that contemplative piety, or the intercourse between God and the human soul, *cannot be poetical.* But here we at once ask ourselves, what does he mean by poetical? "The essence of poetry," he says, "is invention—such invention as, by producing something unexpected, surprises and delights." Here, again, there is confusion and sophistry. There is much high and noble poetry of which invention, such invention as is here spoken of, is not the essence. Devotional poetry is of that character. Who would require something unexpected and surprising in a strain of thanksgiving, repentance, or supplication? Such feelings as these, if rightly expressed, may exalt or prostrate the soul, without much—without any aid from the imagination—except in as far as the imagination will work under the power of every great emotion that does not absolutely confound mortal beings, and humble them down even below the very dust. There may be "no grace from novelty of sentiment," and "very little from novelty of expression"—to use Dr Johnson's words—for it is neither grace nor novelty that the spirit of the poet is seeking—"the strain we hear is of a higher mood;"

and "few as the topics of devotion may be," (but are they few?) and "universally known," they are all commensurate—nay, far more than commensurate with the whole power of the soul—never can they become unaffecting while it is our lot to die;—even from the lips of ordinary men, the words that flow on such topics flow effectually, if they are earnest, simple, and sincere; but from the lips of genius, inspired by religion, who shall dare to say that, on such topics, words have not flowed that are felt to be poetry almost worthy of the Celestial Ardours around the Throne, and by their majesty to "link us to the radiant angels," than whom we were made but a little lower, and with whom we may, when time shall be no more, be equalled in heaven?

We do not hesitate to say, that Dr Johnson's doctrine of the *effect* of poetry is wholly false. If it do indeed please, by exhibiting an idea more grateful to the mind than things themselves afford, that is only because the things themselves are imperfect—more so than suits the aspirations of a spirit, always aspiring, because immortal, to a higher sphere—a higher order of being. But when God himself is, with all awe and reverence, made the subject of song—then it is the office—the sacred office of poetry—not to exalt the subject, but to exalt the soul that contemplates it. That poetry can do, else why does human nature glory in the "Paradise Lost?"

"Whatever is great, desirable, or tremendous, is comprised in the name of the Supreme Being. Omnipotence cannot be exalted—Infinity cannot be amplified—Perfection cannot be improved." Should not this go to

prohibit all speech—all discourse—all sermons concerning the divine attributes? Immersed as they are in matter, our souls wax dull, and the attributes of the Deity are but as mere names. Those attributes cannot, indeed, be exalted by poetry. "The perfection of God cannot be improved"—nor was it worthy of so wise a man so to speak; but while the Creator abideth in his own incomprehensible Being, the creature, too willing to crawl blind and hoodwinked along the earth, like a worm, may be raised by the voice of the charmer, "some sweet singer of Israel," from his slimy track, and suddenly be made to soar on wings up into the ether.

Would Dr Johnson have declared the uselessness of Natural Theology? On the same ground he must have done so, to preserve consistency in his doctrine. Do we, by exploring wisdom, and power, and goodness, in all animate and inanimate creation, exalt Omnipotence, amplify infinity, or improve perfection? We become ourselves exalted by such divine contemplations—by knowing the structure of a rose-leaf or of an insect's wing. We are reminded of what, alas! we too often forget, and exclaim, "Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name!" And while science explores, may not poetry celebrate the glories and the mercies of our God?

The argument against which we contend gets weaker and weaker as it proceeds—the gross misconception of the nature of poetry on which it is founded becomes more and more glaring—the paradoxes, dealt out as confidently as if they were self-evident truths, more and

more repulsive alike to our feelings and our understandings. "The employments of pious meditation are faith, thanksgiving, repentance, and supplication. Faith, invariably uniform, cannot be invested by fancy with decorations. Thanksgiving, though the most joyful of all holy effusions, yet addressed to a Being superior to us, is confined to a few modes, and is to be felt rather than expressed. Repentance, trembling in the presence of the Judge, is not at leisure for cadences and epithets. Supplication to men may diffuse itself through many topics of persuasion; but supplication to God can only cry for mercy." What a vain attempt authoritatively to impose upon the common sense of mankind! Faith is not invariably uniform. To preserve it unwavering—unquaking—to save it from lingering or from sudden death—is the most difficult service to which the frail spirit—frail even in its greatest strength—is called every day—every hour—of this troubled, perplexing, agitating, and often most unintelligible life! "Liberty of will," says Jeremy Taylor, "is like the motion of a magnetic needle towards the north, full of trembling and uncertainty till it be fixed in the beloved point: it wavers as long as it is free, and is at rest when it can choose no more. It is humility and truth to allow to man this liberty; and, therefore, for this we may lay our faces in the dust, and confess that our dignity and excellence suppose misery, and are imperfection, but the instrument and capacity of all duty and all virtue." Happy he whose faith is finally "fixed in the beloved point!" But even of that faith, what hinders the poet

whom it has blessed to sing? While, of its tremblings, and veerings, and variations, why may not the poet, whose faith has experienced, and still may experience them all, breathe many a melancholy and mournful lay, assuaged, ere the close, by the descent of peace?

Thanksgiving, it is here admitted, is the "most joyful of all holy effusions;" and the admission is sufficient to prove that it cannot be "confined to a few modes." "Out of the fulness of the heart the tongue speaketh;" and though at times the heart will be too full for speech, yet as often even the coldest lips prove eloquent in gratitude—yea, the very dumb do speak—nor, in excess of joy, know the miracle that has been wrought upon them by the power of their own mysterious and high enthusiasm.

That "repentance, trembling in the presence of the Judge, should not be at leisure for cadences and epithets," is in one respect true; but nobody supposes that during such moments—or hours—poetry is composed; and surely when they have passed away, which they must do, and the mind is left free to meditate upon them, and to recall them as shadows of the past, there is nothing to prevent them from being steadily and calmly contemplated, and depictured in somewhat softened and altogether endurable light, so as to become proper subjects even of poetry—that is, proper subjects of such expression as human nature is prompted to clothe with all its emotions, as soon as they have subsided, after a swell or a storm, into a calm, either placid altogether, or still bearing traces of the agitation that has ceased, and have

left the whole being self-possessed, and both capable and desirous of indulging itself in an after-emotion at once melancholy and sublime. Then, repentance will not only be "at leisure for cadences and epithets," but cadences and epithets will of themselves move harmonious numbers, and give birth, if genius as well as piety be there, to religious poetry. Cadences and epithets are indeed often sought for with care, and pains, and ingenuity; but they often come for unsought; and never more certainly and more easily than when the mind recovers itself from some oppressive mood, and, along with a certain sublime sadness, is restored to the full possession of powers that had for a short severe season been overwhelmed, but afterwards look back, in very inspiration, on the feelings that during their height were nearly unendurable, and then unfit for any outward and palpable form. The criminal trembling at the bar of an earthly tribunal, and with remorse and repentance receiving his doom, might, in like manner, be wholly unable to set his emotions to the measures of speech; but when recovered from the shock by pardon, or reprieve, or submission, is there any reason why he should not calmly recall the miseries and the prostration of spirit attendant on that hour, and give them touching and pathetic expression?

"Supplication to man may diffuse itself through many topics of persuasion; but supplication to God can only cry for mercy." And in that cry we say that there may be poetry; for the God of Mercy suffers his creatures to approach his throne in supplication, with words which

they have learned when supplicating one another; and the feeling of being forgiven, which we are graciously permitted to believe may follow supplication, and spring from it, may vent itself in many various and most affecting forms of speech. Men will supplicate God in many other words besides those of doubt and of despair; hope will mingle with prayer; and hope, as it glows, and burns, and expands, will speak in poetry—else poetry there is none proceeding from any of our most sacred passions.

Dr Johnson says, "Of sentiments purely religious, it will be found that the most simple expression is the most sublime. Poetry loses its lustre and its power, because it is applied to the decoration of something more excellent than itself." Here he had in his mind the most false notions of poetry, which he had evidently imagined to be an art despising simplicity—whereas simplicity is its very soul. Simple expression, he truly says, is in religion most sublime—and why should not poetry be simple in its expression? Is it not always so—when the mood of mind it expresses is simple, concise, and strong, and collected into one great emotion? But he uses—as we see—the terms "lustre" and "decoration"—as if poetry necessarily, by its very nature, was always ambitious and ornate; whereas we all know, that it is often in all its glory direct and simple as the language of very childhood, and for that reason sublime.

With such false nations of poetry, it is not to be wondered at that Dr Johnson, enlightened man as he was, should have concluded his argument with this absurdity

—"The ideas of Christian theology are too simple for eloquence, too sacred for fiction, and too majestic for ornament; to recommend them by tropes and figures, is to magnify by a concave mirror the sidereal hemisphere." No. Simple as they are—on them have been bestowed, and by them awakened, the highest strains of eloquence—and here we hail the shade of Jeremy Taylor alone—one of the highest that ever soared from earth to heaven; sacred as they are, they have not been desecrated by the fictions—so to call them—of John Milton; majestic as are the heavens, their majesty has not been lowered by the ornaments that the rich genius of the old English divines has so profusely hung around them, like dewdrops glistening on the fruitage of the Tree of Life. Tropes and figures are nowhere more numerous and refulgent than in the Scriptures themselves, from Isaiah to St John; and, magnificent as are the "sidereal heavens" when the eye looks aloft, they are not to our eyes less so, nor less lovely, when reflected in the bosom of a still lake or the slumbering ocean.

This statement of facts destroys at once all Dr Johnson's splendid sophistry—splendid at first sight—but on closer inspection a mere haze, mist, or smoke, illuminated by an artificial lustre. How far more truly, and how far more sublimely, does Milton, "that mighty orb of song," speak of his own divine gift—the gift of Poetry! "These abilities are the inspired gift of God, rarely bestowed, and are of power to inbreed and cherish in a great people the seeds of virtue and public civility; to allay the perturbation of the mind, and set the affections

to a right tune; to celebrate in glorious and lofty hymns the throne and equipage of God's Almightiness, and what he suffers to be wrought with high providence in his Church; to sing victorious agonies of Martyrs and Saints, the deeds and triumphs of just and pious nations, doing valiantly through faith against the enemies of Christ; to deplore the general relapse of kingdoms and states from virtue and God's true worship. Lastly, whatsoever in religion is holy and sublime, and in virtue amiable or grave; whatsoever hath passion, or admiration in all the changes of that which is called fortune from without, or the wily subtleties and reflexions of men's thoughts from within; all these things, with a solid and treatable smoothness, to paint out and describe—Teaching over the whole book of morality and virtue, through all instances of example, with such delight to those, especially of soft and delicious temper, who will not so much as look upon Truth herself unless they see her elegantly dressed; that, whereas the paths of honesty and good life that appear now rugged and difficult, appear to all men easy and pleasant, though they were rugged and difficult indeed."

It is not easy to believe that no great broad lights have been thrown on the mysteries of men's minds since the days of the great poets, moralists, and metaphysicians of the ancient world. We seem to feel more profoundly than they—to see, as it were, into a new world. The things of that world are of such surpassing worth, that in certain awe-struck moods we regard them as almost above the province of Poetry. Since the revelation of

Christianity, all moral thought has been sanctified by Religion. Religion has given it a purity, a solemnity, a sublimity, which, even among the noblest of the heathen, we shall look for in vain. The knowledge that shone but by fits and dimly on the eyes of Socrates and Plato, "that rolled in vain to find the light," has descended over many lands into "the huts where poor men lie"—and thoughts are familiar there, beneath the low and smoky roofs, higher far than ever flowed from the lips of Grecian sage meditating among the magnificence of his pillared temples. The whole condition and character of the Human Being, in Christian countries, has been raised up to a loftier elevation; and he may be looked at in the face without a sense of degradation, even when he wears the aspect of poverty and distress. Since that Religion was given us, and not before, has been felt the meaning of that sublime expression—The Brotherhood of Man.

Yet it is just as true, that there is as much misery and suffering in Christendom—nay, far more of them all—than troubled and tore men's hearts during the reign of all those superstitions and idolatries. But with what different feelings is it all thought of—spoken of—looked at—alleviated—repented—expiated—atoned for—now? In the olden time, such was the prostration of the "million," that it was only when seen in high places that even Guilt and Sin were felt to be appalling;—Remorse was the privilege of Kings and Princes—and the Furies shook their scourges but before the eyes of

the high-born, whose crimes had brought eclipse across the ancestral glories of some ancient line.

But we now know that there is but one origin from which flow all disastrous issues, alike to the king and the beggar. It is sin that does "with the lofty equalize the low;" and the same deep-felt community of guilt and groans which renders Religion awful, has given to poetry in a lower degree something of the same character—has made it far more profoundly tender, more overpoweringly pathetic, more humane and thoughtful far, more humble as well as more high, like Christian Charity more comprehensive; nay, we may say, like Christian Faith, felt by those to whom it is given to be from on high; and if not utterly destroyed, darkened and miserably weakened by a wicked or vicious life.

We may affirm, then, that as human nature has been so greatly purified and elevated by the Christian Religion, Poetry, which deals with human nature in all its dearest and most intimate concerns, must have partaken of that purity and that elevation—and that it may now be a far holier and more sacred inspiration, than when it was fabled to be the gift of Apollo and the Muses. We may not circumscribe its sphere. To what cerulean heights shall not the wing of Poetry soar? Into what dungeon-gloom shall she not descend? If such be her powers and privileges, shall she not be the servant and minister of Religion?

If from moral fictions of life Religion be altogether excluded, then it would indeed be a waste of words to

show that they must be worse than worthless. They must be, not imperfect merely, but false, and not false merely, but calumnious against human nature. The agonies of passion fling men down to the dust on their knees, or smite them motionless as stone statues, sitting alone in their darkened chambers of despair. But sooner or later, all eyes, all hearts look for comfort to God. The coldest metaphysical analyst could not avoid *that*, in his sage enumeration of "each particular hair" that is twisted and untwisted by him into a sort of moral tie; and surely the impassioned and philosophical poet will not, dare not, for the spirit that is within him, exclude *that* from his elegies, his hymns, and his songs, which, whether mournful or exulting, are inspired by the life-long, life-deep conviction, that all the greatness of the present is but for the future—that the praises of this passing earth are worthy of his lyre, only because it is overshadowed by the eternal heavens.

But though the total exclusion of Religion from Poetry aspiring to be a picture of the life or soul of man, be manifestly destructive of its very essence—how, it may be asked, shall we set bounds to this spirit—how shall we limit it—measure it—and accustom it to the curb of critical control? If Religion be indeed all-in-all, and there are few who openly deny it, must we, nevertheless, deal with it only in allusion—hint it as if we were half afraid of its spirit, half ashamed—and cunningly contrive to save our credit as Christians, without subjecting ourselves to the condemnation of critics, whose scorn, even in this enlightened age, has—the

more is the pity—even by men conscious of their genius and virtue, been feared as more fatal than death?

No: Let there be no compromise between false taste and true Religion. Better to be condemned by all the periodical publications in Great Britain than your own conscience. Let the dunce, with diseased spleen, who edits one obscure Review, revile and rail at you to his heart's discontent, in hollow league with his black-biled brother, who, sickened by your success, has long laboured in vain to edit another, still more unpublishable—but do you hold the even tenor of your way, assured that the beauty which nature, and the Lord of nature, have revealed to your eyes and your heart, when sown abroad will not be suffered to perish, but will have everlasting life. Your books—humble and unpretending though they be—yet here and there a page, not uninspired by the spirit of Truth, and Faith, and Hope, and Charity—that is, by Religion—will be held up before the ingle light, close to the eyes of the pious patriarch, sitting with his children's children round his knees—nor will any one sentiment, chastened by that fire that tempers the sacred links that bind together the brotherhood of man, escape the solemn search of a soul, simple and strong in its Bible-taught wisdom, and happy to feel and own communion of holy thought with one unknown—even perhaps by name—who although dead yet speaketh—and, without superstition, is numbered among the saints of that lowly household.

He who knows that he writes in the fear of God and in the love of man, will not arrest the thoughts that flow

from his pen, because he knows that they may—will be —insulted and profaned by the name of cant, and he himself held up as a hypocrite. In some hands, ridicule is indeed a terrible weapon. It is terrible in the hands of indignant genius, branding the audacious forehead of falsehood or pollution. But ridicule in the hands either of cold-blooded or infuriated Malice, is harmless as a birch-rod in the palsied fingers of a superannuated beldam, who in her blear-eyed dotage has lost her school. The Bird of Paradise might float in the sunshine unharmed all its beautiful life long, although all the sportsmen of Cockaigne were to keep firing at the star-like plumage during the Christmas holydays of a thousand years.

We never are disposed not to enjoy a religious spirit in metrical composition, but when induced to suspect that it is not sincere; and then we turn away from the hypocrite, just as we do from a pious pretender in the intercourse of life. Shocking it is, indeed, to see "fools rush in where angels fear to tread;" nor have we words to express our disgust and horror at the sight of fools, not rushing in among those awful sanctities before which angels vail their faces with their wings, but mincing in, with red slippers and flowered dressing-gowns—would-be fashionables, with crow-quills in hands like those of milliners, and rings on their fingers—afterwards extending their notes into Sacred Poems for the use of the public—penny-a-liners, reporting the judgments of Providence as they would the proceedings in a police court.

SACRED POETRY.

CHAPTER II.

THE distinctive character of poetry, it has been said, and credited almost universally, is *to please.* That they who have studied the laws of thought and passion should have suffered themselves to be deluded by an unmeaning word is mortifying enough; but it is more than mortifying—it perplexes and confounds—to think that poets themselves, and poets too of the highest order, have declared the same degrading belief of what is the scope and tendency, the end and aim of their own divine art—forsooth, *to please!* Pleasure is no more the end of poetry, than it is the end of knowledge, or of virtue, or of religion, or of this world. The end of poetry is pleasure, delight, instruction, expansion, elevation, honour, glory, happiness here and hereafter, or it is nothing. Is the end of Paradise Lost to please? Is the end of Dante's Divine Comedy to please? Is the end of the Psalms of David to please? Or of the songs of Isaiah? Yet it is probable that poetry has often been injured or vitiated by having been written in the spirit of this creed. It relieved poets from the burden of their duty—from the responsibility of their endowments—from the conscience that is in genius. We suspect that this doctrine has borne especially hard on all sacred poetry, disinclined poets to devoting their genius to it—and consigned, if

not to oblivion, to neglect, much of what is great in that magnificent walk. For if the masters of the Holy Harp are to strike it but to please—if their high inspirations are to be deadened and dragged down by the prevalent power of such a mean and unworthy aim—they will either be contented to awaken a few touching tones of "those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide"—unwilling to prolong and deepen them into the diapason of praise—or they will deposit their lyre within the gloom of the sanctuary, and leave unawakened "the soul of music sleeping on its strings."

All arguments, or rather objections to, sacred poetry, dissolve as you internally look at them, like unabiding mist-shapes, or rather like imagined mirage where no mirage is, but the mind itself makes ocular deceptions for its own amusement. By sacred poetry, is mostly meant Scriptural; but there are, and always have been conceited and callous critics, who would exclude all religious feelings from poetry, and indeed from prose too, compendiously calling them all cant. Had such criticasters been right, all great nations would not have so gloried in their great bards. Poetry, it is clear, embraces all we can experience; and every high, impassioned, imaginative, intellectual, and moral state of being becomes religious before it passes away, provided it be left free to seek the empyrean, and not adstricted to the glebe by some severe slavery of condition, which destroys the desire of ascent by the same inexorable laws that palsy the power, and reconcile the toilers to the doom of the dust. If all the states of being that poetry illustrates

do thus tend, of their own accord, towards religious elevation, all high poetry must be religious; and so it is, for its whole language is breathing of a life "above the smoke and stir of this dim spot which men call earth;" and the feelings, impulses, motives, aspirations, obligations, duties, privileges, which it shadows forth or embodies, enveloping them in solemn shade or attractive light, are all, directly or indirectly, manifestly or secretly, allied with the sense of the immortality of the soul, and the belief of a future state of reward and retribution. Extinguish that sense and that belief in a poet's soul, and he may hang up his harp.

Among the great living poets, Wordsworth is the one whose poetry is to us the most inexplicable—with all our reverence for his transcendent genius, we do not fear to say the most open to the most serious charges—on the score of its religion. From the first line of the Lyrical Ballads to the last of the "Excursion"—it is avowedly one system of thought and feeling, embracing his experiences of human life, and his meditations on the moral government of this world. The human heart—the human mind—the human soul—to use his own fine words—is "the haunt and main region of his song." There are few, perhaps none of our affections—using that term in its largest sense—which have not been either slightly touched upon, or fully treated, by Wordsworth. In his poetry, therefore, we behold an image of what, to his eye, appears to be human life. Is there, or is there not, some great and lamentable defect in that image, marring both the truth and beauty of the repre-

sentation? We think there is—and that it lies in his Religion.

In none of Wordsworth's poetry, previous to his "Excursion," is there any allusion made, except of the most trivial and transient kind, to Revealed Religion. He certainly cannot be called a Christian poet. The hopes that lie beyond the grave—and the many holy and awful feelings in which on earth these hopes are enshrined and fed, are rarely if ever part of the character of any of the persons—male or female—old or young—brought before us in his beautiful Pastorals. Yet all the most interesting and affecting ongoings of this life are exquisitely delineated—and innumerable of course are the occasions on which, had the thoughts and feelings of revealed religion been in Wordsworth's heart during the hours of inspiration—and he often has written like a man inspired—they must have found expression in his strains; and the personages, humble or high, that figure in his representations, would have been, in their joys or their sorrows, their temptations and their trials, Christians. But most assuredly this is not the case; the religion of this great Poet—in all his poetry published previous to the "Excursion"—is but the "Religion of the Woods."

In the "Excursion," his religion is brought forward—prominently and conspicuously—in many elaborate dialogues between Priest, Pedlar, Poet, and Solitary. And a very high religion it often is; but is it Christianity? No—it is not. There are glimpses given of some of the Christian doctrines; just as if the various philosophical

disquisitions, in which the Poem abounds, would be imperfect without some allusion to the Christian creed, The interlocutors—eloquent as they all are—say but little on that theme; nor do they show—if we except the Priest—much interest in it—any solicitude; they may all, for any thing that appears to the contrary, be deists.

Now, perhaps, it may be said that Wordsworth was deterred from entering on such a theme by the awe of his spirit. But there is no appearance of this having been the case in any one single passage in the whole poem. Nor could it have been the case with such a man—a man privileged, by the power God has bestowed upon him, to speak unto all the nations of the earth, on all themes, however high and holy, which the children of men can feel and understand. Christianity, during almost all their disquisitions, lay in the way of all the speakers, as they kept journeying among the hills.

> "On man, on nature, and on human life,
> Musing in Solitude!"

But they, one and all, either did not perceive it, or, perceiving it, looked upon it with a cold and indifferent regard, and passed by into the poetry breathing from the dewy woods, or lowering from the cloudy skies. Their talk is of "Palmyra central, in the desert," rather than of Jerusalem. On the mythology of the Heathen much beautiful poetry is bestowed; but none on the theology of the Christian.

Yet there is no subject too high for Wordsworth's muse. In the preface to the "Excursion," he says daringly—we fear too daringly,—

> " Urania, I shall need
> Thy guidance, or a greater muse, if such
> Descend to earth, or dwell in highest heaven!
> For I must tread on shadowy ground, must sink
> Deep—and aloft ascending, breathe in worlds
> To which the heaven of heavens is but a veil.
> All strength—all terror—single or in bands,
> That ever was put forth in personal form,
> Jehovah with his thunder, and the choir
> Of shouting angels, and the empyreal thrones;
> I pass them unalarm'd!"

Has the poet, who believes himself entitled to speak thus of the power and province given to him to put forth and to possess, spoken in consonance with such a strain, by avoiding, in part of the very work to which he so triumphantly appeals, the Christian Revelation? Nothing could have reconciled us to a burst of such—audacity—we use the word considerately—but the exhibition of a spirit divinely embued with the Christian faith. For what else, we ask, but the truths beheld by the Christian Faith, can be beyond those "personal forms," "beyond Jehovah," "the choirs of shouting angels," and the "empyreal thrones?"

This omission is felt the more deeply—the more sadly—from such introduction as there is of Christianity; for one of the books of the "Excursion" begins with a very long, and a very noble eulogy on the Church Establishment in England. How happened it that he who pronounced such eloquent panegyric—that they who so devoutly inclined their ear to imbibe it—should have been all contented with

> " That basis laid, these principles of faith
> Announced,"

and yet throughout the whole course of their discussions, before and after, have forgotten apparently that there was either Christianity or a Christian Church in the world?

We do not hesitate to say, that the thoughtful and sincere student of this great poet's works, must regard such omission—such inconsistency or contradiction—with more than the pain of regret; for there is no relief afforded to our defrauded hearts from any quarter to which we can look. A pledge has been given, that all the powers and privileges of a Christian poet shall be put forth and exercised for our behoof—for our delight and instruction; all other poetry is to sink away before the heavenly splendour; Urania, or a greater muse, is invoked; and after all this solemn, and more than solemn preparation made for our initiation into the mysteries, we are put off with a well-merited encomium on the Church of England, from Bishop to Curate inclusive; and though we have much fine poetry, and some high philosophy, it would puzzle the most ingenious to detect much, or any, Christian religion.

Should the opinion boldly avowed be challenged, we shall enter into further exposition and illustration of it; meanwhile, we confine ourselves to some remarks on one of the most elaborate tales of domestic suffering in the Excursion. In the story of Margaret, containing, we believe, more than four hundred lines—a tolerably long poem in itself—though the whole and entire state of a poor deserted wife and mother's heart, for year after year of "hope deferred, that maketh the heart

sick," is described, or rather dissected, with an almost cruel anatomy—not one quivering fibre being left unexposed—all the fluctuating, and finally all the constant agitations laid bare and naked that carried her at last lingeringly to the grave—there is not—except one or two weak lines, that seem to have been afterwards purposely dropped in—one single syllable about Religion. Was Margaret a Christian?—Let the answer be yes—as good a Christian as ever kneeled in the small mountain chapel, in whose churchyard her body now waits for the resurrection. If she was—then the picture painted of her and her agonies, is a libel not only on her character, but on the character of all other poor Christian women in this Christian land. Placed as she was, for so many years, in the clutches of so many passions—she surely must have turned sometimes—ay, often, and often, and often, else had she sooner left the clay—towards her Lord and Saviour. But of such "comfort let no man speak," seems to have been the principle of Mr Wordsworth; and the consequence is, that this, perhaps the most elaborate picture he ever painted of any conflict within any one human heart, is, with all its pathos, repulsive to every religious mind—*that* being wanting without which the entire representation is vitiated, and necessarily false to nature—to virtue—to resignation—to life—and to death. These may seem strong words—but we are ready to defend them in the face of all who may venture to impugn their truth.

This utter absence of Revealed Religion, where it

ought to have been all-in-all—for in such trials in real life it is all-in-all, or we regard the existence of sin or sorrow with repugnance—shocks far deeper feelings within us than those of taste, and throws over the whole poem to which the tale of Margaret belongs, an unhappy suspicion of hollowness and insincerity in that poetical religion, which at the best is a sorry substitute indeed for the light that is from heaven. Above all, it flings, as indeed we have intimated, an air of absurdity over the orthodox Church-of-Englandism—for once to quote a not inexpressive barbarism of Bentham—which every now and then breaks out either in passing compliment—amounting to but a bow—or in eloquent laudation, during which the poet appears to be prostrate on his knees. He speaks nobly of cathedrals, and minsters, and so forth, reverendly adorning all the land; but in none —no, not one of the houses of the humble, the hovels of the poor into which he takes us—is the religion preached in those cathedrals and minsters, and chanted in prayer to the pealing organ, represented as the power that in peace supports the roof-tree, lightens the hearth, and is the guardian, the tutelary spirit of the lowly dwelling. Can this be right? Impossible. And when we find the Christian religion thus excluded from Poetry, otherwise as good as ever was produced by human genius, what are we to think of the Poet, and of the world of thought and feeling, fancy and imagination, in which he breathes, nor fears to declare to all men that he believes himself to be one of the order of the High Priests of nature?

Shall it be said, in justification of the poet, that he

presents a very interesting state of mind, sometimes found actually existing, and does not pretend to present a model of virtue?—that there are miseries which shut some hearts against religion, sensibilities which, being too severely tried, are disinclined, at least at certain stages of their suffering, to look to that source for comfort?—that this is human nature, and the description only follows it?—that when "in peace and comfort" her best hopes were directed to "the God in heaven," and that her habit in that respect was only broken up by the stroke of her calamity, causing such a derangement of her mental power as should deeply interest the sympathies?—in short, that the poet is an artist, and that the privation of all comfort from religion completes the picture of her desolation?

Would that such defence were of avail! But of whom does the poet so pathetically speak?

> "Of one whose stock
> Of virtues bloom'd beneath this lowly roof.
> She was a woman of a steady mind,
> Tender and deep in her excess of love;
> Not speaking much—pleased rather with the joy
> Of her own thoughts. By some especial care
> Her temper had been framed, as if to make
> A Being who, by adding love to fear,
> Might live on earth a life of happiness.
> Her wedded partner lack'd not on his side
> The humble worth that satisfied her heart—
> Frugal, affectionate, sober, and withal
> Keenly industrious. She with pride would tell
> That he was often seated at his loom
> In summer, ere the mower was abroad
> Among the dewy grass—in early spring,
> Ere the last star had vanish'd. They who pass'd

> At evening, from behind the garden fence
> Might hear his busy spade, which he would ply
> After his daily work, until the light
> Had fail'd, and every leaf and flower were lost
> In the dark hedges. So their days were spent
> In peace and comfort; and a pretty boy
> Was their best hope, next to the God in heaven."

We are prepared by that character, so amply and beautifully drawn, to pity her to the utmost demand that may be made on our pity—to judge her leniently, even if in her desertion she finally give way to inordinate and incurable grief. But we are not prepared to see her sinking from depth to depth of despair, in wilful abandonment to her anguish, without oft-repeated and long-continued passionate prayers for support or deliverance from her trouble, to the throne of mercy. Alas! it is true that in our happiness our gratitude to God is too often more selfish than we think, and that in our misery it faints or dies. So is it even with the best of us—but surely not all life long—unless the heart has been utterly crushed—the brain itself distorted in its functions, by some calamity, under which nature's self gives way, and falls into ruins like a rent house when the last prop is withdrawn.

> "Nine tedious years
> From their first separation—nine long years
> She linger'd in unquiet widowhood—
> A wife and widow. Needs must it have been
> A sore heart-wasting."

It must indeed, and it is depicted by a master's hand. But even were it granted that sufferings, such as hers, might, in the course of nature, have extinguished all

heavenly comfort—all reliance on God and her Saviour—the process and progress of such fatal relinquishment should have been shown, with all its struggles and all its agonies; if the religion of one so good was so unavailing, its weakness should have been exhibited and explained, that we might have known assuredly why, in the multitude of the thoughts within her, there was no solace for her sorrow, and how unpitying Heaven let her die of grief.

This tale, too, is the very first told by the Pedlar to the Poet, under circumstances of much solemnity, and with affecting note of preparation. It arises naturally from the sight of the ruined cottage near which they, by appointment, have met; the narrator puts his whole heart into it, and the listener is overcome by its pathos. No remark is made on Margaret's grief, except that

> "I turn'd aside in weakness, nor had power
> To thank him for the tale which he had told.
> I stood, and leaning o'er the garden wall,
> Review'd that woman's sufferings; and it seem'd
> To comfort me, while, with a brother's love,
> I bless'd her in the impotence of grief.
> Then towards the cottage I return'd, and traced
> Fondly, though with an interest more mild,
> The secret spirit of humanity,
> Which, 'mid the calm, oblivious tendencies
> Of nature—'mid her plants, and weeds, and flowers,
> And silent overgrowings, still unrevived."

Such musings receive the Pedlar's approbation, and he says—

> "My friend! enough to sorrow you have given.
> The purposes of wisdom ask no more.
> Be wise and cheerful, and no longer read
> The forms of things with an unworthy eye.
> She sleeps in the calm earth, and peace is here."

As the Poet, then, was entirely satisfied with the tale, so ought to be all readers. No hint is dropped that there was any thing to blame in the poor woman's nine years' passion—no regret breathed that she had sought not, by means offered to all, for that peace of mind which passeth all understanding—no question asked, how it was that she had not communed with her own afflicted heart, over the pages of that Book where it is written, "come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give ye rest!" The narrator had indeed said, that on revisiting her during her affliction—

> "Her humble lot of books,
> Which in her cottage window, heretofore,
> Had been piled up against the corner panes
> In seemly order, now, with straggling leaves,
> Lay scatter'd here and there, open or shut,
> As they had chanced to fall."

But he does not mention the Bible.

What follows has always seemed to us of a questionable character—

> "I well remember that those very plumes,
> Those weeds, and the high spear-grass on that wall,
> By mist and silent rain-drops silver'd o'er,
> As once I pass'd, into my heart convey'd
> So still an image of tranquillity,
> So calm and still, and look'd so beautiful
> Amid the uneasy thoughts which fill'd my mind,
> *That what we feel of sorrow and despair*
> *From ruin and from change, and all the griefs*
> *The passing shows of Being leave behind,*
> Appear'd an idle dream, that could not live
> Where meditation was. I turn'd away,
> And walk'd along my road in happiness."

These are fine lines; nor shall we dare, in face of them,

to deny the power of the beauty and serenity of nature to assuage the sorrow of us mortal beings, who live for awhile on her breast. Assuredly, there is sorrow that may be so assuaged; and the sorrow here spoken of—for poor Margaret, many years dead—was of that kind. But does not the heart of a man beat painfully, as if violence were offered to its most sacred memories, to hear from the lips of wisdom, that "sorrow and despair from ruin and from change, and all the griefs" that we can suffer here below, appear an idle dream among plumes, and weeds, and speargrass, and mists, and rain-drops? "Where meditation is!" What meditation? Turn thou, O child of a day! to the New Testament, and therein thou mayest find comfort. It matters not whether a spring-bank be thy seat by Rydal Mere, "while heaven and earth do make one imagery," or thou sittest in the shadow of death, beside a tomb.

We said, that for the present we should confine our remarks on this subject to the story of Margaret; but they are, more or less, applicable to almost all the stories in the Excursion. In many of the eloquent disquisitions and harangues of the Three Friends, they carry along with them the sympathies of all mankind; and the wisest may be enlightened by their wisdom. But what we complain of is, that neither in joy nor grief, happiness nor misery, is religion the dominant principle of thought and feeling in the character of any one human being with whom we are made acquainted, living or dead. Of not a single one, man or woman, are we made to feel the beauty of holiness—the power and the glory of the

Christian Faith. Beings are brought before us whom we pity, respect, admire, love. The great poet is high-souled and tender-hearted—his song is pure as the morning, bright as day, solemn as night. But his inspiration is not drawn from the Book of God, but from the Book of Nature. Therefore it fails to sustain his genius when venturing into the depths of tribulation and anguish. Therefore imperfect are his most truthful delineations of sins and sorrows; and not in his philosophy, lofty though it be, can be found alleviation or cure of the maladies that kill the soul. Therefore never will the Excursion become a bosom-book, endeared to all ranks and conditions of a Christian People, like "The Task" or the "Night Thoughts." Their religion is that of revelation—it acknowledges no other source but the word of God. To that word, in all difficulty, distress, and dismay, these poets appeal; and though they may sometimes, or often, misinterpret its judgment, that is an evil incident to finite intelligence; and the very consciousness that it is so, inspires a perpetual humility that is itself a virtue found to accompany only a Christian's Faith.

We have elsewhere vindicated the choice of a person of low degree as Chief of the "Excursion," and exult to think that a great poet should have delivered his highest doctrines through the lips of a Scottish Pedlar.

> "Early had he learn'd
> To reverence the volume that displays
> The mystery of life that cannot die."

Throughout the poem he shows that he does rever-

ence it, and that his whole being has been purified and elevated by its spirit. But fond as he is of preaching, and excellent in the art or gift, a Christian Preacher he is not—at best a philosophical divine. Familiar by his parentage and nurture with all most hallowed round the poor man's hearth, and guarded by his noble nature from all offence to the sanctities there enshrined; yet the truth must be told, he speaks not, he expounds not the Word as the servant of the Lord, as the follower of Him Crucified. There is very much in his announcements to his equals wide of the mark set up in the New Testament. We seem to hear rather of a divine power and harmony in the universe than of the Living God. The spirit of Christianity as connected with the Incarnation of the Deity, the Human-God, the link between heaven and earth, between helplessness and omnipotence, ought to be every where visible in the religious effusions of a Christian Poet—wonder and awe for the greatness of God, gratitude and love for his goodness, humility and self-abasement for his own unworthiness. Passages may perhaps be found in the "Excursion" expressive of that spirit, but they are few and faint, and somewhat professional, falling not from the Pedlar but from the Pastor. If the mind, in forming its conceptions of divine things, is prouder of its own power than humbled in the comparison of its personal inferiority; and in enunciating them in verse, more rejoices in the consciousness of the power of its own genius than in the contemplation of Him from whom cometh every good and perfect gift—it has not attained Piety, and its worship is not an accept-

able service. For it is self-worship—worship of the creature's own conceptions, and an overweening complacency with his own greatness, in being able to form and so to express them as to win or command the praise and adoration of his fellow mortals. Those lofty speculations, alternately declaimed among the mountains, with an accompaniment of waterfalls, by men full of fancies and eloquent of speech, elude the hold of the earnest spirit longing for truth; disappointment and impatience grow on the humblest and most reverent mind, and escaping from the multitude of vain words, the neophyte finds in one chapter of a Book forgotten in that babblement, a light to his way and a support to his steps, which, following and trusting, he knows will lead him to everlasting life.

Throughout the poem there is much talk of the light of nature, little of the light of revelation, and they all speak of the theological doctrines of which our human reason gives us assurance. Such expressions as these may easily lead to important error, and do, indeed, seem often to have been misconceived and misemployed. What those truths are which human reason, unassisted, would discover to us on these subjects, it is impossible for us to know, for we have never seen it left absolutely to itself. Instruction, more or less, in wandering tradition, or in express, full, and recorded revelation, has always accompanied it; and we have never had other experience of the human mind than as exerting its powers under the light of imparted knowledge. In these circumstances, all that can be properly meant by those expressions

which regard the power of the human mind to guide, to enlighten, or to satisfy itself in such great enquiries is, not that it can be the discoverer of truth, but that, with the doctrines of truth set before it, it is able to deduce arguments from its own independent sources which confirm it in their belief; or that, with truth and error proposed to its choice, it has means, to a certain extent, in its own power, of distinguishing one from the other. For ourselves, we may understand easily that it would be impossible for us so to shut out from our minds the knowledge which has been poured in upon them from our earliest years, in order to ascertain what self-left reason could find out. Yet this much we are able to do in the speculations of our philosophy. We can enquire, in this light, what are the grounds of evidence which nature and reason themselves offer for belief in the same truths. A like remark must be extended to the morality which we seem now to inculcate from the authority of human reason. We no longer possess any such independent morality. The spirit of a higher, purer, moral law than man could discover, has been breathed over the world, and we have grown up in the air and the light of a system so congenial to the highest feelings of our human nature, that the wisest spirits amongst us have sometimes been tempted to forget that its origin is divine.

Had the Excursion been written in the poet's later life, it had not been so liable to such objections as these; for much of his poetry composed since that era is imbued with a religious spirit, answering the soul's desire of the

devoutest Christian. His Ecclesiastical Sonnets are sacred poetry indeed. How comprehensive the sympathy of a truly pious heart! How religion reconciles different forms, and modes, and signs, and symbols of worship, provided only they are all imbued with the spirit of faith! This is the toleration Christianity sanctions—for it is inspired by its own universal love. No sectarian feeling here, that would exclude or debar from the holiest chamber in the poet's bosom one sincere worshipper of our Father which is in heaven. Christian brethren! By that mysterious bond our natures are brought into more endearing communion —now more than ever brethren, because of the blood that was shed for us all from His blessed side! Even of that most awful mystery in some prayer-like strains the Poet tremblingly speaks, in many a strain, at once so affecting and so elevating—breathing so divinely of Christian charity to all whose trust is in the Cross! Who shall say what form of worship is most acceptable to the Almighty? All are holy in which the soul seeks to approach him—holy

> "The chapel lurking among trees,
> Where a few villagers on bended knees
> Find solace which a busy world disdains;"

we feel as the poet felt when he breathed to the image of some old abbey—

> "Once ye were holy, ye are holy still!"

And what heart partakes not the awe of his

> "Beneath that branching roof
> Self-poised, and scoop'd into ten thousand cells
> Where light and shade repose, where music dwells
> Lingering—and wandering on as loth to die?"

Read the first of these sonnets with the last—and then once more the strains that come between—and you will be made to feel how various and how vast beneath the sky are the regions set apart by the soul for prayer and worship; and that all places become consecrated—the high and the humble—the mean and the magnificent—in which Faith and Piety have sought to hold communion with Heaven.

But they who duly worship God in temples made with hands, meet every hour of their lives "Devotional Excitements" as they walk among his works; and in the later poetry of Wordsworth these abound—age having solemnized the whole frame of his being, that was always alive to religious emotions—but more than ever now, as around his paths in the evening of life longer fall the mysterious shadows. More fervid lines have seldom flowed from his spirit in its devoutest mood, than some awakened by the sounds and sights of a happy day in May—to him—though no church-bell was heard—a Sabbath. His occasional poems are often felt by us to be linked together by the finest affinities, which perhaps are but affinities between the feelings they inspire. Thus we turn from those lines to some on a subject seemingly very different, from a feeling of such fine affinities—which haply are but those subsisting between all things and thoughts that are pure and good. We hear in them how the Poet, as he gazes on a Family that holds not the Christian Faith, embraces them in the folds of Christian Love—and how religion as well as nature sanctifies the tenderness that is yearning at his heart to-

wards them—"a Jewish Family"—who, though outcasts by Heaven's decree, are not by Heaven, still merciful to man, left forlorn on earth.

How exquisite the stanzas composed in one of the Catholic Chapels in Switzerland—

"Doom'd as we are our native dust
To wet with many a bitter shower,
It ill befits us to disdain
The Altar, to deride the Fane,
Where patient sufferers bend, in trust
To win a happier hour.

"I love, where spreads the village lawn,
Upon some knee-worn Cell to gaze;
Hail to the firm unmoving Cross,
Aloft, where pine their branches toss!
And to the Chapel far withdrawn,
That lurks by lonely ways!

"Where'er we roam—along the brink
Of Rhine—or by the sweeping Po,
Through Alpine vale, or champaign wide,
Whate'er we look on, at our side
Be Charity—to bid us think
And feel, if we would know."

How sweetly are interspersed among them some of humbler mood, most touching in their simple pathos—such as a Hymn for the boatmen as they approach the Rapids—Lines on hearing the song of the harvest damsels floating homeward on the lake of Brientz—the Italian Itinerant and the Swiss Goatherd—and the Three Cottage Girls, representatives of Italian, of Helvetian, and of Scottish beauty, brought together, as if by magic, into one picture, each breathing in her natural grace the peculiar spirit and distinctive character of her country's charms! Such gentle visions disap-

pear, and we sit by the side of the Poet as he gazes from his boat floating on the Lake of Lugano, on the Church of San Salvador, which was almost destroyed by lightning a few years ago, while the altar and the image of the patron saint were untouched, and devoutly listen while he exclaims—

> " Cliffs, fountains, rivers, seasons, times,
> Let all remind the soul of heaven;
> Our slack devotion needs them all;
> And faith, so oft of sense the thrall,
> While she, by aid of Nature, climbs,
> May hope to be forgiven."

We do not hesitate to pronounce " Eclipse of the Sun, 1820," one of the finest lyrical effusions of combined thought, passion, sentiment, and imagery, within the whole compass of poetry. If the beautiful be indeed essentially different from the sublime, we here feel that they may be made to coalesce so as to be in their united agencies one divine power. We called it lyrical, chiefly because of its transitions. Though not an ode, it is odelike in its invocations; and it might be set and sung to music if Handel were yet alive, and St Cecilia to come down for an hour from heaven. How solemn the opening strain! and from the momentary vision of Science on her speculative Tower, how gently glides Imagination down, to take her place by the Poet's side, in his bark afloat beneath Italian skies—suddenly bedimmed, lake, land, and all, with a something between day and night. In a moment we are conscious of Eclipse. Our slight surprise is lost in the sense of a strange beauty—solemn not sad—settling on the face of nature

and the abodes of men. In a single stanza filled with beautiful names of the beautiful, we have a vision of the Lake, with all its noblest banks, and bays, and bowers, and mountains—when in an instant we are wafted away from a scene that might well have satisfied our imagination and our heart—if high emotions were not uncontrollable and omnipotent—wafted away by Fancy with the speed of Fire—lakes, groves, cliffs, mountains, all forgotten—and alight amid an aërial host of figures, human and divine, on a spire that seeks the sky. How still those imaged sanctities and purities, all white as snows of Apennine, stand in the heavenly region, circle above circle, and crowned as with a zone of stars! They are embued with life. In their animation the figures of angels and saints, insensate stones no more, seem to feel the Eclipse that shadows them, and look awful in the portentous light. In his inspiration he transcends the grandeur even of that moment's vision—and beholds in the visages of that aërial host those of the sons of heaven darkening with celestial sorrow at the Fall of Man—when

> "Throngs of celestial visages,
> Darkening like water in the breeze,
> A holy sadness shared.

Never since the day on which the wondrous edifice, in its consummate glory, first saluted the sun, had it inspired in the soul of kneeling saint a thought so sad and so sublime—a thought beyond the reaches of the soul of him whose genius bade it bear up all its holy adornments so far from earth, that the silent company seem

sometimes, as light and shadow moves among them, to be in ascension to heaven. But the Sun begins again to look like the Sun, and the poet, relieved by the joyful light from that awful trance, delights to behold

> " Town and Tower,
> The Vineyard and the Olive Bower,
> Their lustre re-assume;"

and "breathes there a man with soul so dead," that it burns not within him as he hears the heart of the husband and the father breathe forth its love and its fear, remembering on a sudden the far distant whom it has never forgotten—a love and a fear that saddens, but disturbs not, for the vision he saw had inspired him with a trust in the tender mercies of God? Commit to faithful memory, O Friend! who may some time or other be a traveller over the wide world, the sacred stanzas that brings the Poem to a close—and it will not fail to comfort thee when sitting all alone by the well in the wilderness, or walking along the strange streets of foreign cities, or lying in thy cot at midnight afloat on far-off seas.

> " O ye, who guard and grace my Home
> While in far-distant Lands we roam,
> Was such a vision given to you?
> Or, while we look'd with favour'd eyes,
> Did sullen mist hide lake and skies
> And mountains from your view?
>
> " I ask in vain—and know far less,
> If sickness, sorrow, or distress
> Have spared my Dwelling to this hour;
> Sad blindness! but ordained to prove
> Our faith in Heaven's unfailing love,
> And all-controlling power."

Let us fly from Rydal to Sheffield. James Montgomery is truly a religious poet. His popularity, which is great, has, by some scribes sitting in the armless chairs of the scorners, been attributed chiefly to the power of sectarianism. He is, we believe, a sectary; and, if all sects were animated by the spirit that breathes throughout his poetry, we should have no fears for the safety and stability of the Established Church; for in that selfsame spirit was she built, and by that selfsame spirit were her foundations dug in a rock. Many are the lights—solemn and awful all—in which the eyes of us mortal creatures may see the Christian dispensation. Friends, looking down from the top of a high mountain on a city-sprinkled plain, have each his own vision of imagination—each his own sinking or swelling of heart. They urge no inquisition into the peculiar affections of each other's secret breasts—all assured, from what each knows of his brother, that every eye there may see God—that every tongue that has the gift of lofty utterance may sing his praises aloud—that the lips that remain silent may be mute in adoration—and that all the distinctions of habits, customs, professions, modes of life, even natural constitution and form of character, if not lost, may be blended together in mild amalgamation under the common atmosphere of emotion, even as the towers, domes, and temples, are all softly or brightly interfused with the huts, cots, and homesteads—the whole scene below harmonious because inhabited by beings created by the same God—in his own image—and destined for the same immortality.

It is base therefore, and false, to attribute, in an invidious sense, any of Montgomery's fame to any such cause. No doubt many persons read his poetry on account of its religion, who, but for that, would not have read it; and no doubt, too, many of them neither feel nor understand it. But so, too, do many persons read Wordsworth's poetry on account of its religion—the religion of the woods—who, but for that, would not have read it; and so, too, many of them neither feel nor understand it. So is it with the common-manners-painting poetry of Crabbe—the dark-passion-painting poetry of Byron—the high-romance-painting poetry of Scott—and so on with Moore, Coleridge, Southey, and the rest. But it is to the *mens divinior*, however displayed, that they owe all their fame. Had Montgomery not been a true poet, all the Religious Magazines in the world could not have saved his name from forgetfulness and oblivion. He might have flaunted his day like the melancholy Poppy—melancholy in all its ill-scented gaudiness; but as it is, he is like the Rose of Sharon, whose balm and beauty shall not wither, planted on the banks of "that river whose streams make glad the city of the Lord."

Indeed, we see no reason why poetry, conceived in the spirit of a most exclusive sectarianism, may not be of a very high order, and powerfully impressive on minds whose religious tenets are most irreconcilable and hostile to those of the sect. Feelings by being unduly concentrated, are not thereby necessarily enfeebled

—on the contrary, often strengthened; and there is a grand austerity which the imagination more than admires—which the conscience scarcely condemns. The feeling, the conviction from which that austerity grows, is in itself right; for it is a feeling—a conviction of the perfect righteousness of God—the utter worthlessness of self-left man—the awful sanctity of duty—and the dreadfulness of the judgment-doom, from which no soul is safe till the seals have been broken, and the Archangel has blown his trumpet. A religion planted in such convictions as these, may become dark and disordered in its future growth within the spirit; and the tree, though of good seed and in a strong soil, may come to be laden with bitter fruit, and the very droppings of its leaves may be pernicious to all who rest within its shade. Still, such shelter is better in the blast than the trunk of a dead faith; and such food, unwholesome though it be, is not so miserable as famine to a hungry soul.

Grant, then, that there may be in Mr Montgomery's poetry certain sentiments, which, in want of a better word, we call Sectarian. They are not necessarily false, although not perfectly reconcilable to our own creed, which, we shall suppose, is true. On the contrary, we may be made much the better and the wiser men by meditating upon them; for while they may, perhaps, (and we are merely making a supposition,) be too strongly felt by him, they may be too feebly felt by us—they may, perhaps, be rather blots on the beauty of his poetry than of his faith—and if, in some degree, offensive

in the composition of a poem, far less so, or not at all, in that of a life.

All his shorter poems are stamped with the character of the man. Most of them are breathings of his own devout spirit, either delighted or awed by a sense of the Divine goodness and mercy towards itself, or tremblingly alive—not in mere sensibility to human virtues and joys, crimes and sorrows, for that often belongs to the diseased and depraved—but in solemn, moral, and religious thought, to all of good or evil befalling his brethren of mankind. "A sparrow cannot fall to the ground"—a flower of the field cannot wither immediately before his eyes—without awakening in his heart such thoughts as we may believe God intended should be awakened even by such sights as these; for the fall of a sparrow is a scriptural illustration of his providence, and his hand framed the lily, whose array is more royal than was that of Solomon in all his glory. Herein he resembles Wordsworth—less profound certainly—less lofty; for in its highest moods the genius of Wordsworth walks by itself—unapproachable—on the earth it beautifies. But Montgomery's poetical piety is far more prevalent over his whole character; it belongs more essentially and permanently to the man. Perhaps, although we shall not say so, it may be more simple, natural, and true. More accordant, it certainly is, with the sympathies of ordinary minds. The piety of his poetry is far more Christian than that of Wordsworth's. It is in all his feelings, all his thoughts, all his imagery; and at the close of most of his beautiful compositions, which are so often avowals,

confessions, prayers, thanksgivings, we feel, not the moral, but the religion of his song. He "improves" all the "occasions" of this life, because he has an "eye that broods on its own heart;" and that heart is impressed by all lights and shadows, like a river or lake whose waters are pure—pure in their sources and in their course. He is, manifestly, a man of the kindliest home-affections; and these, though it is to be hoped the commonest of all, preserved to him in unabated glow and freshness by innocence and piety, often give vent to themselves in little hymns and odelike strains, of which the rich and even novel imagery shows how close is the connexion between a pure heart and a fine fancy, and that the flowers of poetry may be brought from afar, nor yet be felt to be exotics—to intertwine with the very simplest domestic feelings and thoughts—so simple, so perfectly human, that there is a touch of surprise on seeing them capable of such adornment, and more than a touch of pleasure on feeling how much that adornment becomes them—brightening without changing, and adding admiration to delight—wonder to love.

Montgomery, too, is almost as much of an egotist as Wordsworth; and thence, frequently, his power. The poet who keeps all the appearances of external nature, and even all the passions of humanity, at arm's length, that he may gaze on, inspect, study, and draw their portraits, either in the garb they ordinarily wear, or in a fancy dress, is likely to produce a strong likeness indeed; yet shall his pictures be wanting in ease and freedom—they shall be cold and stiff—and both passion

and imagination shall desiderate something characteristic in nature, of the mountain or the man. But the poet who hugs to his bosom every thing he loves or admires—themselves, or the thoughts that are their shadows—who is himself still the centre of the enchanted circle—who, in the delusion of a strong creative genius, absolutely believes that were he to die, all that he now sees and hears delighted would die with him—who not only sees

"Poetic visions swarm on every bough,"

but the history of all his own most secret emotions written on the very rocks—who gathers up the many beautiful things that in the prodigality of nature lie scattered over the earth, neglected or unheeded, and the more dearly, the more passionately loves them, because they are now appropriated to the uses of his own imagination, who will by her alchymy so further brighten them that the thousands of eyes that formerly passed them by unseen or scorned, will be dazzled by their rare and transcendant beauty—he is the "prevailing Poet!" Montgomery neither seeks nor shuns those dark thoughts that will come and go, night and day, unbidden, forbidden across the minds of all men—fortified although the main entrances may be; but when they do invade his secret, solitary hours, he turns even such visitants to a happy account, and questions them, ghostlike as they are, concerning both the future and the past. Melancholy as often his views are, we should not suppose him a man of other than a cheerful mind; for whenever the

theme allows or demands it, he is not averse to a sober glee, a composed gayety that, although we cannot say it ever so far sparkles out as to deserve to be called absolutely brilliant, yet lends a charm to his lighter-toned compositions, which it is peculiarly pleasant now and then to feel in the writings of a man whose genius is naturally, and from the course of life, not gloomy indeed, but pensive, and less disposed to indulge itself in smiles than in tears.

SACRED POETRY.

CHAPTER III.

People now-a-days will write, because they see so many writing; the impulse comes upon them from without, not from within; loud voices from streets and squares of cities call on them to join the throng, but the still small voice that speaketh in the penetralia of the spirit is mute; and what else can be the result, but, in place of the song of lark, or linnet, or nightingale, at the best a concert of mocking-birds, at the worst an oratorio of ganders and bubbleys?

At this particular juncture or crisis, the disease would fain assume the symptoms of religious inspiration. The poetasters are all pious—all smitten with sanctity—Christian all over—and crossing and jostling on the Course of Time—as they think, on the high-road to Heaven and Immortality. Never was seen before such a shameless set of hypocrites. Down on their knees they fall in booksellers' shops, and, crowned with fools-cap, repeat to Blue-Stockings prayers addressed in doggerel to the Deity! They bandy about the Bible as if it were an Album. They forget that the poorest sinner has a soul to be saved, as well as a set of verses to be damned; they look forward to the First of the Month with more fear and trembling than to the Last Day; and beseech a critic to be merciful upon them

with far more earnestness than they ever beseeched their Maker. They pray through the press—vainly striving to give some publicity to what must be private for evermore; and are seen wiping away, at tea-parties, the tears of contrition and repentance for capital crimes perpetrated but on paper, and perpetrated thereon so paltrily, that so far from being worthy of hell-fire, such delinquents, it is felt, would be more suitably punished by being singed like plucked fowls with their own unsaleable sheets. They are frequently so singed; yet singeing has not the effect upon them for which singeing is designed; and like chickens in a shower that have got the pip, they keep still gasping and shooting out their tongues, and walking on tip-toe with their tails down, till finally they go to roost in some obscure corner, and are no more seen among bipeds.

Among those, however, who have been unfortunately beguiled by the spirit of imitation and sympathy into religious poetry, one or two—who for the present must be nameless—have shown feeling; and would they but obey their feeling, and prefer walking on the ground with their own free feet, to attempting to fly in the air with borrowed and bound wings, they might produce something really poetical, and acquire a creditable reputation. But they are too aspiring; and have taken into their hands the sacred lyre without due preparation. He who is so familiar with his Bible, that each chapter, open it where he will, teems with household words, may draw thence the theme of many a pleasant and pathetic song. For is not all human nature, and all human

life shadowed forth in those pages? But the heart, to sing well from the Bible, must be embued with religious feelings, as a flower is alternately with dew and sunshine. The study of THE BOOK must have been begun in the simplicity of childhood, when it was felt to be indeed divine—and carried on through all those silent intervals in which the soul of manhood is restored, during the din of life, to the purity and peace of its early being. The Bible must be to such a poet even as the sky—with its sun, moon, and stars—its boundless blue with all its cloud-mysteries—its peace deeper than the grave, because of realms beyond the grave—its tumult louder than that of life, because heard altogether in all the elements. He who begins the study of the Bible late in life, must, indeed, devote himself to it—night and day—and with a humble and a contrite heart as well as an awakened and soaring spirit, ere he can hope to feel what he understands, or to understand what he feels—thoughts and feelings breathing in upon him, as if from a region hanging, in its mystery, between heaven and earth. Nor do we think that he will lightly venture on the composition of poetry drawn from such a source. The very thought of doing so, were it to occur to his mind, would seem irreverent; it would convince him that he was still the slave of vanity, and pride, and the world.

They alone, therefore, to whom God has given genius as well as faith, zeal, and benevolence—will, of their own accord, fix their Pindus either on Lebanon or Calvary—and of these but few. The genius must be

high—the faith sure—and human love must coalesce with divine, that the strain may have power to reach the spirits of men, immersed as they are in matter, and with all their apprehensions and conceptions blended with material imagery, and the things of this moving earth and this restless life.

So gifted and so endowed, a great or good poet, having chosen his subject well within religion, is on the sure road to immortal fame. His work, when done, must secure sympathy for ever; a sympathy not dependent on creeds, but out of which creeds spring, all of them manifestly moulded by imaginative affections of religion. Christian Poetry will outlive every other; for the time will come when Christian Poetry will be deeper and higher far than any that has ever yet been known among men. Indeed, the sovereign songs hitherto have been either religious or superstitious; and as "the day-spring from on High that has visited us" spreads wider and wider over the earth, "the soul of the world, dreaming of things to come," shall assuredly see more glorified visions than have yet been submitted to her ken. That Poetry has so seldom satisfied the utmost longings and aspirations of human nature, can only have been because Poetry has so seldom dealt in its power with the only mysteries worth knowing—the greater mysteries of religion, into which the Christian is initiated only through faith, an angel sent from heaven to spirits struggling by supplications and sacrifices to escape from sin and death.

These, and many other thoughts and feelings con-

cerning the "Vision and the Faculty divine," when employed on divine subjects, have arisen within us, on reading—which we have often done with delight—"The Christian Year," so full of Christian poetry of the purest character. Mr Keble is a poet whom Cowper himself would have loved—for in him piety inspires genius, and fancy and feeling are celestialized by religion. We peruse his book in a tone and temper of spirit similar to that which is breathed upon us by some calm day in spring, when all imagery is serene and still—cheerful in the main—yet with a touch and a tinge of melancholy, which makes all the blended bliss and beauty at once more endearing and more profound. We should no more think of criticising such poetry than of criticising the clear blue skies—the soft green earth—the "liquid lapse" of an unpolluted stream, that

> "Doth make sweet music with the enamell'd stones,
> Giving a gentle kiss to every flower
> It overtaketh on its pilgrimage."

All is purity and peace; as we look and listen, we partake of the universal calm, and feel in nature the presence of Him from whom it emanated. Indeed, we do not remember any poetry nearly so beautiful as this, which reminds one so seldom of the poet's art. We read it without ever thinking of the place which its author may hold among poets, just as we behold a "lily of the field" without comparing it with other flowers, but satisfied with its own pure and simple loveliness; or each separate poem may be likened, in its unostentatious—unambitious—unconscious beauty—to

"A violet by a mossy stone,
Half hidden to the eye."

Of all the flowers that sweeten this fair earth, the violet is indeed the most delightful in itself—form, fragrance, and colour—nor less in the humility of its birthplace, and its haunts in the "sunshiny shade." Therefore, 'tis a meet emblem of those sacred songs that may be said to blossom on Mount Sion.

The most imaginative poetry inspired by Nature, and dedicated to her praise, is never perfectly and consummately beautiful till it ascends into the religious; but then religion breathes from, and around, and about it, only at last when the poet has been brought, by the leading of his own aroused spirit, to the utmost pitch of his inspiration. He begins, and continues long, unblamed in mere emotions of beauty; and he often pauses unblamed, and brings his strain to a close, without having forsaken this earth, and the thoughts and feelings which belong alone to this earth. But poetry like that of the "Christian Year" springs at once, visibly and audibly, from religion as its fount. If it, indeed, issue from one of the many springs religion opens in the human heart, no fear of its ever being dried up. Small indeed may seem the silver line, when first the rill steals forth from its sacred source! But how soon it begins to sing with a clear loud voice in the solitude! Bank and brae—tree, shrub, and flower—grow greener at each successive waterfall—the rains no more disturb that limpid element than the dews—and never does it lose some reflection of the heavens.

In a few modest words, Mr Keble states the aim and object of his volume. He says truly, that it is the peculiar happiness of the Church of England to possess in her authorized formularies an ample and secure provision, both for a sound rule of faith and a sober standard of feeling in matters of practical religion. The object of his publication will be attained, if any person find assistance from it in bringing his own thoughts and feelings into more entire unison with those recommended and exemplified in the Prayer-Book. We add, that its object has been attained. In England, "The Christian Year" is already placed in a thousand homes among household books. People are neither blind nor deaf yet to lovely sights and sounds—and a true poet is as certain of recognition now as at any period of our literature. In Scotland we have no prayer-book printed on paper—perhaps it would be better if we had; but the prayer-book which has inspired Mr Keble, is compiled and composed from another Book, which, we believe, is more read in Scotland than in any other country. Here the Sabbath reigns in power, that is felt to be a sovereign power over all the land. We have, it may be said, no prescribed holydays; but all the events recorded in the Bible, and which in England make certain days holy in outward as well as inward observances, are familiar to our knowledge and our feeling *here;* and therefore the poetry that seeks still more to hallow them to the heart, will find every good heart recipient of its inspiration—for the Christian creed is "wide and general as the casing air," and felt as profoundly in the

Highland heather-glen, where no sound of psalms is heard but on the Sabbath, as in the cathedral towns and cities of England, where so often

> "Through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault,
> The pealing anthem swells the note of praise."

Poetry, in our age, has been made too much a thing to talk about—to show off upon—as if the writing and the reading of it were to be reckoned among what are commonly called accomplishments. Thus, poets have too often sacrificed the austere sanctity of the divine art to most unworthy purposes, of which, perhaps, the most unworthy—for it implies much voluntary self-degradation—is mere popularity. Against all such low aims he is preserved, who, with Christian meekness, approaches the muse in the sanctuaries of religion. He seeks not to force his songs on the public ear; his heart is free from the fever of fame; his poetry is praise and prayer. It meets our ear like the sound of psalms from some unseen dwelling among the woods or hills, at which the wayfarer or wanderer stops on his journey, and feels at every pause a holier solemnity in the silence of nature. Such poetry is indeed *got by heart;* and memory is then tenacious to the death, for her hold on what she loves is strengthened as much by grief as by joy; and, when even hope itself is dead—if, indeed, hope ever dies—the trust is committed to despair. Words are often as unforgetable as voiceless thoughts; they become very thoughts themselves, and *are* what they represent. How are many of the simply, rudely, but fervently and beautifully rhymed Psalms of

David, very part and parcel of the most spiritual treasures of the Scottish peasant's being!

> "The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want.
> He makes me down to lie
> In pastures green: he leadeth me
> The quiet waters by."

These four lines sanctify to the thoughtful shepherd on the braes every stream that glides through the solitary places—they have often given colours to the greensward beyond the brightness of all herbage and of all flowers. Thrice hallowed is that poetry which makes us mortal creatures feel the union that subsists between the Book of Nature and the Book of Life!

Poetry has endeared childhood by a thousand pictures, in which fathers and mothers behold with deeper love the faces of their own offspring. Such poetry has almost always been the production of the strongest and wisest minds. Common intellects derive no power from earliest memories; the primal morn, to them never bright, has utterly faded in the smoky day; the present has swallowed up the past, as the future will swallow up the present; each season of life seems to stand by itself as a separate existence; and when old age comes, how helpless, melancholy, and forlorn! But he who lives in the spirit of another creed, sees far into the heart of Christianity. He hears a divine voice saying—"Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven!" Thus it is that poetry throws back upon the New Testament the light she has borrowed from it, and that man's

mortal brother speaks in accordance with the Saviour of man. On a dead insensible flower—a lily—a rose—a violet—a daisy, Poetry may pour out all its divinest power—just as the sun itself sometimes seems to look with all its light on some one especial blossom, all at once made transparently lustrous. And what if the flower be alive in all its leaves—and have in it an immortal spirit? Or what if its leaves be dead, and the immortal spirit gone away to heaven? Genius shall change death into sleep—till the grave, in itself so dark and dismal, shall seem a bed of bright and celestial repose. From poetry, in words or marble—both alike still and serene as water upon grass—we turn to the New Testament, and read of the "Holy Innocents." "They were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb." We look down into the depths of that text—and we then turn again to Keble's lines, which from those depths have flowed over upon the uninspired page! Yet not uninspired—if that name may be given to strains which, like the airs that had touched the flowers of Paradise, "whisper whence they stole those balmy sweets." Revelation has shown us that "we are greater than we know;" and who may neglect the Infancy of that Being for whom Godhead died!

They who read the lines on "the Holy Innocents" in a mood of mind worthy of them, will go on, with an equal delight, through those on "The Epiphany." They are separated in the volume by some kindred and congenial strains; but when brought close together, they

occupy the still region of thought as two large clear stars do of themselves seem to occupy the entire sky.

How far better than skilfully—how inspiredly does this Christian poet touch upon each successive holy theme—winging his way through the stainless ether like some dove gliding from tree to tree, and leaving one place of rest only for another equally happy, on the folding and unfolding of its peaceful flight! Of late many versifiers have attempted the theme; and some of them with shameful unsuccess. A bad poem on such a subject is a sin. He who is a Christian indeed, will, when the star of Bethlehem rises before his closed eyes, be mute beneath the image, or he will hail it in strains simple as were those of the shepherds watching their flocks by night when it appeared of old, high as were those of the sages who came from the East bearing incense to the Child in the Manger. Such are this Poet's strains, evolving themselves out of the few words —"Behold, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was; when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy."

The transition from those affecting lines is natural and delightful to a strain further on in the volume, entitled "Catechism." How soon the infant spirit is touched with love—another name for religion—none may dare to say who have watched the eyes of little children. Feeling and thought would seem to come upon them like very inspiration—so strong it often is, and sudden, and clear; yet, no doubt, all the work of

natural processes going on within Immortality. The wisdom of age has often been seen in the simplicity of childhood—creatures but five or six years old—soon perhaps about to disappear—astonishing, and saddening, and subliming the souls of their parents and their parents' friends, by a holy precocity of all pitiful and compassionate feelings, blended into a mysterious piety that has made them sing happy hymns on the brink of death and the grave. Such affecting instances of almost infantine unfolding of the spirit beneath spiritual influences should not be rare—nor are they rare—in truly Christian households. Almost as soon as the heart is moved by filial affection, that affection grows reverent even to earthly parents—and, erelong, becomes piety towards the name of God and Saviour. Yet philosophers have said that the child must not be too soon spoken to about religion. Will they fix the time? No—let religion—a myriad-meaning word—be whispered and breathed round about them, as soon as intelligence smiles in their eyes and quickens their ears, while enjoying the sights and sounds of their own small yet multitudinous world.

Let us turn to another strain of the same mood, which will be read with tears by many a grateful heart—on the "Churching of Women." What would become of us without the ceremonies of religion? How they strengthen the piety out of which they spring! How, by concentrating all that is holy and divine around their outward forms, do they purify and sanctify the affections! What a change on his infant's face is wrought before a father's

eyes by Baptism! How the heart of the husband and the father yearns, as he sees the wife and mother kneeling in thanksgiving after child-birth!

"Consider the lilies of the field how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." What is all the poetry that genius ever breathed over all the flowers of this earth, to that one divine sentence! It has inspired our Christian poet—and here is his heart-felt homily.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

"Sweet nurslings of the vernal skies,
Bathed in soft airs, and fed with dew,
What more than magic in you lies
To fill the heart's fond view?
In childhood's sports companions gay,
In sorrow, on Life's downward way,
How soothing! in our last decay
Memorials prompt and true.

"Relics ye are of Eden's bowers,
As pure, as fragrant, and as fair,
As when ye crown'd the sunshine hours
Of happy wanderers there.
Fall'n all beside—the world of life,
How is it stain'd with fear and strife!
In Reason's world what storms are rife,
What passions rage and glare!

"But cheerful and unchanged the while
Your first and perfect form ye show,
The same that won Eve's matron smile
In the world's opening glow.

The stars of Heaven a course are taught
Too high above our human thought;—
Ye may be found if ye are sought,
And as we gaze we know.

"Ye dwell beside our paths and homes,
Our paths of sin, our homes of sorrow,
And guilty man, where'er he roams,
Your innocent mirth may borrow.
The birds of air before us fleet,
They cannot brook our shame to meet—
But we may taste your solace sweet,
And come again to-morrow.

"Ye fearless in your nests abide—
Nor may we scorn, too proudly wise,
Your silent lessons, undescried
By all but lowly eyes;
For ye could draw th' admiring gaze
Of Him who worlds and hearts surveys:
Your order wild, your fragrant maze,
He taught us how to prize.

"Ye felt your Maker's smile that hour,
As when he paused and own'd you good;
His blessing on earth's primal bower,
Yet felt it all renew'd.
What care ye now, if winter's storm
Sweep ruthless o'er each silken form?
Christ's blessing at your heart is warm,
Ye fear no vexing mood.

"Alas! of thousand bosoms kind,
That daily court you and caress,
How few the happy secret find
Of your calm loveliness!
'Live for to-day! to-morrow's light
To-morrow's cares shall bring to sight.
Go, sleep like closing flowers at night,
And Heaven thy morn will bless.'"

Such poetry as this must have a fine influence on all

the best human affections. Sacred are such songs to sorrow—and sorrow is either a frequent visiter, or a domesticated inmate, in every household. Religion may thus be made to steal unawares, even during ordinary hours, into the commonest ongoings of life. Call not the mother unhappy who closes the eyes of her dead child, whether it has smiled lonely in the house, the sole delight of her eyes, or bloomed among other flowers, now all drooping for its sake—nor yet call the father unhappy who lays his sweet son below the earth, and returns to the home where his voice is to be heard never more. That affliction brings forth feelings unknown before in his heart; calming all turbulent thoughts by the settled peace of the grave. Then every page of the Bible is beautiful—and beautiful every verse of poetry that thence draws its inspiration. Thus in the pale and almost ghostlike countenance of decay, our hearts are not touched by the remembrance alone of beauty which is departed, and by the near extinction of loveliness which we behold fading before our eyes—but a beauty, fairer and deeper far, lies around the hollow eye and the sunken cheek, breathed from the calm air of the untroubled spirit that has heard resigned the voice that calls it away from the dim shades of mortality. Well may that beauty be said to be religious; for in it speaks the soul, conscious, in the undreaded dissolution of its earthly frame, of a being destined to everlasting bliss. With every deep emotion arising from our contemplation of such beauty as this—religious beauty beaming in the human

countenance, whether in joy or sadness, health or decay—there is profoundly interfused a sense of the soul's spirituality, which silently sheds over the emotion something celestial and divine, rendering it not only different in degree, but altogether distinct in kind, from all the feelings that things merely perishable can inspire—so that the spirit is fully satisfied, and the feeling of beauty is but a vivid recognition of its own deathless being and ethereal essence. This is a feeling of beauty which was but faintly known to the human heart in those ages of the world when all other feelings of beauty were most perfect; and accordingly we find, in the most pathetic strains of their elegiac poetry, lamentations over the beauty intensely worshipped in the dust, which was to lie for ever over its now beamless head. But to the Christian who may have seen the living lustre leave the eye of some beloved friend, there must have shone a beauty in his latest smile, which spoke not alone of a brief scene closed, but of an endless scene unfolding; while its cessation, instead of leaving him in utter darkness, seemed to be accompanied with a burst of light.

Much of our most fashionable Modern Poetry is at once ludicrously and lamentably unsuitable and unseasonable to the innocent and youthful creatures who shed tears "such as angels weep" over the shameful sins of shameless sinners, crimes which, when perpetrated out of Poetry, and by persons with vulgar surnames, elevate their respective heroes to that vulgar altitude—the gallows. The darker—the stronger passions, forsooth! And

what hast thou to do—my dove-eyed Margaret—with the darker and stronger passions? Nothing whatever in thy sweet, still, serene, and seemingly almost sinless world. Be the brighter and the weaker passions thine—brighter indeed—yet say not *weaker*, for they are strong as death;—Love and Pity, Awe and Reverence, Joy, Grief, and Sorrow, sunny smiles and showery tears—be these all thy own—and sometimes, too, on melancholy nights, let the heaven of thy imagination be spanned in its starriness by the most celestial Evanescence—a Lunar Rainbow.

There is such perfect sincerity in the "Christian Year," such perfect sincerity, and consequently such simplicity, that though the production of a fine and finished scholar, we cannot doubt that it will some day or other find its way into many of the dwellings of humble life. Such descent, if descent it be, must be of all receptions the most delightful to the heart of a Christian poet. As intelligence spreads more widely over the land, why fear that it will deaden religion? Let us believe that it will rather vivify and quicken it; and that in time true poetry, such as this, of a character somewhat higher than probably can be yet felt, understood, and appreciated by the people, will come to be easy and familiar, and blended with all the other benign influences breathed over their common existence by books. Meanwhile the "Christian Year" will be finding its way into many houses where the inmates read from the love of reading—not for mere amusement only, but for instruction and a deeper delight; and we shall be happy if our

recommendation causes its pages to be illumined by the gleams of a few more peaceful hearths, and to be rehearsed by a few more happy voices in the "parlour twilight."

We cannot help expressing the pleasure it has given us to see so much true poetry coming from Oxford. It is delightful to see that classical literature, which sometimes, we know not how, certainly has a chilling effect on poetical feeling, there warming it as it ought to do, and causing it to produce itself in song. Oxford has produced many true poets; Collins, Warton, Bowles, Heber, Milman, and now Keble—are all her own—her inspired sons. Their strains are not steeped in "port and prejudice;" but in the—Isis. Heaven bless Iffley and Godstow—and many another sweet old ruined place—secluded, but not far apart from her own inspiring Sanctities. And those who love her not, never may the Muses love!

SACRED POETRY.

CHAPTER IV.

In his Poem, entitled, "The Omnipresence of the Deity," Mr Robert Montgomery writes thus:—

"Lo! there, in yonder fancy-haunted room,
What mutter'd curses trembled through the gloom,
When pale, and shiv'ring, and bedew'd with fear,
The dying sceptic felt his hour drew near!
From his parch'd tongue no sainted murmurs fell,
No bright hopes kindled at his faint farewell;
As the last throes of death convulsed his cheek,
He gnash'd, and scowl'd, and raised a hideous shriek.
Rounded his eyes into a ghastly glare,
Lock'd his white lips—and all was mute despair!
Go, child of darkness, see a Christian die;
No horror pales his lip, or rolls his eye;
No dreadful doubts, or dreamy terrors, start
The hope Religion pillows on his heart,
When with a dying hand he waves adieu
To all who love so well, and weep so true:
Meek, as an infant to the mother's breast
Turns fondly longing for its wonted rest,
He pants for where congenial spirits stray,
Turns to his God, and sighs his soul away."

First, as to the execution of this passage. "Fancy-haunted" may do, but it is not a sufficiently strong expression for the occasion. In every such picture as this, we demand appropriate vigour in every word intended to be vigorous, and which is important to the effect of the whole.

"From his parch'd tongue no sainted murmurs fell,
No bright hopes kindled at his faint farewell."

How could they?—The line but one before is,

"What mutter'd curses trembled through the gloom."

This, then, is purely ridiculous, and we cannot doubt that Mr Montgomery will confess that it is so; but independently of that, he is describing the death-bed of a person who, *ex hypothesi*, could have no bright hopes, could breathe no sainted murmurs. He might as well, in a description of a negress, have told us that she had no long, smooth, shining, yellow locks—no light-blue eyes—no ruddy and rosy cheeks—nor yet a bosom white as snow. The execution of the picture of the Christian is not much better—it is too much to use, in the sense here given to them, no fewer than three verbs—"pales"—"rolls"—"starts," in four lines.

"The hope Religion pillows on the heart,"

is not a good line, and it is a borrowed one.

"When with a dying hand he waves adieu,"

conveys an unnatural image. Dying men do not act so. Not thus are taken eternal farewells. The motion in the sea-song was more natural—

"She waved adieu, and kiss'd her lily hand."

"*Weeps so true*," means nothing, nor is it English. The grammar is not good of,

"He *pants for where* congenial spirits"—

Neither is the word *pants* by any means the right one; and in such an awful crisis, admire who may the simile

of the infant longing for its mother's breast, we never can in its present shape; while there is in the line,

"Turns to his God, *and sighs his soul away;*"

a prettiness we very much dislike—alter one word, and it would be voluptuous—nor do we hesitate to call the passage a puling one altogether, and such as ought to be expunged from all paper.

But that is not all we have to say against it—it is radically and essentially bad, because it either proves nothing of what it is meant to prove—or what no human being on earth ever disputed. Be fair—be just in all that concerns religion. Take the best, the most moral if the word can be used, the most enlightened Sceptic, and the true Christian, and compare their death-beds. That of the Sceptic will be disturbed or disconsolate—that of the Christian confiding or blessed. But to contrast the death-bed of an absolute maniac, muttering curses, gnashing and scowling, and "raising a hideous shriek," and "rounding his eyes with a ghastly glare," and convulsed, too, with severe bodily throes—with that of a convinced, confiding, and conscientious Christian, a calm, meek, undoubting believer, happy in the "hope religion pillows on his heart," and enduring no fleshly agonies, can serve no purpose under the sun. Men who have the misery of being unbelievers, are at all times to be pitied—most of all in their last hours; but though theirs be then dim melancholy, or dark despair, they express neither the one state nor the other by mutterings, curses, and hideous shrieks. Such a wretch

there may sometimes be—like him "who died and made no sign;" but there is no more sense in seeking to brighten the character of the Christian by its contrast with that of such an Atheist, than by contrast with a fiend to brighten the beauty of an angel.

Finally, are the death-beds of all good Christians so calm as this—and do they all thus meekly

"Pant for where congenial spirits stray,"

a line, besides its other vice, most unscriptural? Congenial spirit is not the language of the New Testament. Alas! for poor weak human nature at the dying hour! Not even can the Christian always then retain unquaking trust in his Saviour! "This is the blood that was shed for thee," are words whose mystery quells not always nature's terror. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is renewed in vain—and he remembers, in doubt and dismay, words that, if misunderstood, would appal all the Christian world—"My God—my God—why hast thou forsaken me?" Perhaps, before the Faith, that has waxed dim and died in his brain distracted by pain, and disease, and long sleeplessness, and a weight of woe—for he is a father who strove in vain to burst those silken ties, that winding all round and about his very soul and his very body, bound him to those dear little ones, who are of the same spirit and the same flesh, —we say, before that Faith could, by the prayers of holy men, be restored and revivified, and the Christian, once more comforted by thinking on Him, who for all human beings did take upon him the rueful burden and agonies of the Cross—Death may have come for his prey, and

left the chamber, of late so hushed and silent, at full liberty to weep! Enough to know, that though Christianity be divine, we are human,—that the vessel is weak in which that glorious light may be enshrined—weak as the potter's clay—and that though Christ died to save sinners, sinners who believe in Him, and therefore shall not perish, may yet lose hold of the belief when their understandings are darkened by the shadow of death, and, like Peter losing faith and sinking in the sea, feel themselves descending into some fearful void, and cease here to be, ere they find voice to call on the name of the Lord—"Help, or I perish!"

What may be the nature of the thoughts and feelings of an Athiest, either when in great joy or great sorrow, full of life and the spirit of life, or in mortal malady and environed with the toils of death, it passes the power of our imagination even dimly to conceive; nor are we convinced that there ever was an utter Atheist. The thought of a God will enter in, barred though the doors be, both of the understanding and the heart, and all the windows supposed to be blocked up against the light. The soul, blind and deaf as it may often be, cannot always resist the intimations all life long, day and night, forced upon it from the outer world; its very necessities, nobler far than those of the body, even when most degraded, importunate when denied their manna, are to it oftentimes a silent or a loud revelation. Then, not to feel and think as other beings do with "discourse of reason," is most hard and difficult indeed, even for a short time, and on occasions of very inferior moment. Being men,

we are carried away, willing or unwilling, and often unconsciously, by the great common instinct; we keep sailing with the tide of humanity, whether in flow or ebb —fierce as demons and the sons of perdition, if that be the temper of the congregating hour—mild and meek as Pity, or the new-born babe, when the afflatus of some divine sympathy has breathed through the multitude, nor one creature escaped its influence, like a spring-day that steals through a murmuring forest, till not a single tree, even in the darkest nook, is without some touch of the season's sunshine. Think, then, of one who would fain be an Atheist, conversing with the "sound, healthy children of the God of heaven!" To his reason, which is his solitary pride, arguments might in vain be addressed, for he exults in being "an Intellectual All in All," and is a bold-browed sophist to daunt even the eyes of Truth—eyes which can indeed "outstare the eagle" when their ken is directed to heaven, but which are turned away in aversion from the human countenance that would dare to deny God. Appeal not to the intellect of such a man, but to his heart; and let not even that appeal be conveyed in any fixed form of words—but let it be an appeal of the smiles and tears of affectionate and loving lips and eyes—of common joys and common griefs, whose contagion is often felt, beyond prevention or cure, where two or three are gathered together —among families thinly sprinkled over the wilderness, where, on God's own day, they repair to God's own house, a lowly building on the brae, which the Creator of suns and systems despiseth not, nor yet the beatings of the few

contrite hearts therein assembled to worship him—in the cathedral's "long-drawn aisles and fretted vaults"—in mighty multitudes all crowded in silence, as beneath the shadow of a thunder-cloud, to see some one single human being die—or swaying and swinging backwards and forwards, and to and fro, to hail a victorious armament returning from the war of Liberty, with him who hath "taken the start of this majestic world" conspicuous from afar in front, encircled with music, and with the standard of his unconquered country afloat above his head. Thus, and by many thousand other potent influences for ever at work, and from which the human heart can never make its safe escape, let it flee to the uttermost parts of the earth, to the loneliest of the multitude of the isles of the sea, are men, who vainly dream that they are Atheists, forced to feel God. Nor happens this but rarely—nor are such "angel-visits few and far between." As the most cruel have often, very often, thoughts tender as dew, so have the most dark often, very often, thoughts bright as day. The sun's golden finger writes the name of God on the clouds, rising or setting, and the Atheist, falsely so called, starts in wonder and in delight, which his soul, because it is immortal, cannot resist, to behold that Bible suddenly opened before his eyes on the sky. Or some old, decrepit, greyhaired crone, holds out her shrivelled hand, with dim eyes patiently fixed on his, silently asking charity—silently, but in the holy name of God; and the Atheist, taken unawares, at the very core of his heart bids "God bless her," as he relieves her uncomplaining miseries.

If then Atheists do exist, and if their death-beds may be described for the awful or melancholy instruction of their fellow-men, let them be such Atheists as those whom, let us not hesitate to say it, we may blamelessly love with a troubled affection; for our Faith may not have preserved us from sins from which they are free —and we may give even to many of the qualities of their most imperfect and unhappy characters almost the name of virtues. No curses on their death-beds will they be heard to utter. No black scowlings—no horrid gnashing of teeth—no hideous shriekings will there appal the loving ones who watch and weep by the side of him who is dying disconsolate. He will hope, and he will fear, now that there is a God indeed every where present—visible now in the tears that fall, audible now in the sighs that breathe for his sake—in the still small voice. That Being forgets not those by whom he has been forgotten; least of all, the poor "Fool who has said in his heart there is no God," and who knows at last that a God there is, not always in terror and trembling, but as often perhaps in the assurance of forgiveness, which, undeserved by the best of the good, may not be withheld even from the worst of the bad, if the thought of a God and a Saviour pass but for a moment through the darkness of the departing spirit—like a dove shooting swiftly, with its fair plumage, through the deep but calm darkness that follows the subsided storm.

So, too, with respect to Deists. Of unbelievers in Christianity there are many kinds—the reckless, the ignorant, the callous, the confirmed, the melancholy, the doubting, the despairing—the *good*. At their death-

beds, too, may the Christian poet, in imagination, take his stand – and there may he even hear

> " The still sad music of humanity,
> Not harsh nor grating, but of amplest power
> To soften and subdue !"

Oftener all the sounds and sights there will be full of most rueful anguish; and that anguish will groan in the poet's lays when his human heart, relieved from its load of painful sympathies, shall long afterwards be inspired with the pity of poetry, and sing in elegies, sublime in their pathos, the sore sufferings and the dim distress that clouded and tore the dying spirit, longing, but all unable—profound though its longings be—as life's daylight is about to close upon that awful gloaming, and the night of death to descend in oblivion—to believe in the Redeemer.

Why then turn but to such death-bed, if indeed religion, and not superstition, described that scene—as that of Voltaire? Or even of Rousseau, whose dying eyes sought, in the last passion, the sight of the green earth, and the blue skies, and the sun shining so brightly, when all within the brain of his worshipper was fast growing dimmer and more dim—when all the unsatisfied spirit, that scarcely hoped a future life, knew not how it could ever take farewell of the present with tenderness enough, and enough of yearning and craving after its disappearing beauty, and when as if the whole earth were at that moment beloved even as his small peculiar birthplace—

> " Et dulces moriens reminiscitur Argos."

The Christian poet, in his humane wisdom, will, for instruction's sake of his fellow-men, and for the discovery

and the revealment of ever-sacred truth, keep aloof from such death-beds as these, or take his awful stand beside them to drop the perplexed and pensive tear. For we know not what it is that we either hear or see; and holy Conscience, hearing through a confused sound, and seeing through an obscure light, fears to condemn, when perhaps she ought only to pity—to judge another, when perhaps it is her duty but to use that inward eye for her own delinquencies. He, then, who designs to benefit his kind by strains of high instruction, will turn from the death-bed of the famous Wit, whose brilliant fancy hath waxed dim as that of the clown—whose malignant heart is quaking beneath the Power it had so long derided, with terrors over which his hated Christian triumphs—and whose intellect, once so perspicacious that it could see but too well the motes that are in the sun, the specks and stains that are on the flowing robe of nature herself—prone, in miserable contradiction to its better being, to turn them as proofs against the power and goodness of the Holy One who inhabiteth eternity —is now palsy-stricken as that of an idiot, and knows not even the sound of the name of its once vain and proud possessor—whose crowded theatres had risen up with one mouth to honour, and then, with deafening acclamations,

"Raise a mortal to the skies!"

There he is—it matters not now whether on down or straw—stretched, dreadly a skeleton, and gnashing—may it be in consciousness, for otherwise what pangs are these! —gnashing his teeth, within lips once so eloquent, now white with foam and slaver; and the whole mouth, of

yore so musical, grinning ghastly, like the fleshless face of fear-painted death! Is that Voltaire? He who, with wit, thought to shear the Son of God of all his beams? —with wit, to loosen the dreadful fastenings of the Cross?—with wit, to scoff at Him who hung thereon, while the blood and water came from the wound in his blessed side?—with wit, to drive away those Shadows of Angels, that were said to have rolled off the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre of the resurrection?—with wit, to deride the ineffable glory of transfigured Godhead on the Mount, and the sweet and solemn semblance of the Man Jesus in the garden?—with wit, to darken all the decrees of Providence?—and with wit,

"To shut the gates of Mercy on mankind?"

Nor yet will the Christian poet long dwell in his religious strains, though awhile he may linger there, "and from his eyelids wipe the tears that sacred pity hath engendered," beside the dying couch of Jean Jaques Rousseau—a couch of turf beneath trees—for he was ever a lover of Nature, though he loved all things living or dead as madmen love. His soul, while most spiritual, was sensual still, and with tendrils of flesh and blood embraced—even as it did embrace the balm-breathing form of voluptuous woman—the very phantoms of his most etherealized imagination. Vice stained all his virtues—as roses are seen, in some certain soils, and beneath some certain skies, always to be blighted, and their fairest petals to bear on them something like blots of blood. Over the surface of the mirror of his mind, which reflected so much of the imagery of man and na-

ture, there was still, here and there, on the centre or round the edges, rust-spots, that gave back no image, and marred the proportions of the beauty and the grandeur that yet shone over the rest of the circle set in the rich carved gold. His disturbed, and distracted, and defeated friendships, that all vanished in insane suspicions, and seemed to leave his soul as well satisfied in its fierce or gloomy void, as when it was filled with airy and glittering visions, are all gone for ever now. Those many thoughts and feelings—so melancholy, yet still fair, and lovely, and beautiful—which, like bright birds encaged, with ruffled and drooping wings, once so apt to soar, and their music mute, that used to make the wide woods to ring, were confined within the wires of his jealous heart—have now all flown away, and are at rest! Who sits beside the wild and wondrous genius, whose ravings entranced the world? Who wipes the death-sweat from that capacious forehead, once filled with such a multitude of disordered but aspiring fancies? Who, that his beloved air of heaven may kiss and cool it for the last time, lays open the covering that hides the marble sallowness of Rousseau's sin-and-sorrow-haunted breast? One of Nature's least gifted children—to whose eyes nor earth nor heaven ever beamed with beauty—to whose heart were known but the meanest charities of nature; yet mean as they were, how much better in such an hour, than all his imaginings most magnificent! For had he not suffered his own offspring to pass away from his eyes, even like the wood-shadows, only less beloved and less regretted? And in the very midst of the prodigality of love and passion, which he had poured out over the

creations of his ever-distempered fancy, let his living children, his own flesh and blood, disappear as paupers in a chance-governed world? A world in which neither parental nor filial love were more than the names of nonentities—Father, Son, Daughter, Child, but empty syllables, which philosophy heeded not—or rather loved them in their emptiness, but despised, hated, or feared them, when for a moment they seemed pregnant with a meaning from heaven, and each in its holy utterance signifying God!

No great moral or religious lesson can well be drawn, or say rather so well, from such anomalous death-beds, as from those of common unbelievers. To show, in all its divine power, the blessedness of the Christian's faith, it must be compared, rather than contrasted, with the faith of the best and wisest of Deists. The ascendency of the heavenly over the earthly will then be apparent—as apparent as the superior lustre of a star to that of a lighted-up window in the night. For above all other things in which the Christian is happier than the Deist—with the latter, the life beyond the grave is but a dark hope—to the former, "immortality has been brought to light by the Gospel." That difference embraces the whole spirit. It may be less felt—less seen when life is quick and strong; for this earth alone has much and many things to embrace and enchain our being—but in death the difference is as between night and day.

END OF VOLUME SECOND.

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